

Simpson. 220.

MISCELLANEOUS

T R A C T S

ON

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS,

SELECTED AND ORIGINAL.

By the Rev. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

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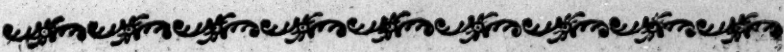
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THE volume that is here put into the hands of the Reader consists of five separate tracts. The three first are extracted from the larger works of a very pious author and fine writer, who, several years ago, was called to his reward.

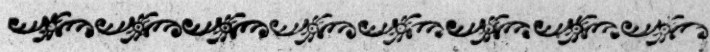
The first is intended to give a concise view of the nature and design of Christianity :

The second to rescue eminent devotion from undeserved contempt :

The third to present to the Reader, as in a mirror, his own moral character ; that, if it is good, he may have the satisfaction of knowing it to be so ; and, if otherwise, that he may be made sensible of his alarming situation, and constrained to seek for deliverance where alone it is to be found.

The fourth tract is an original, and upon a subject more curious, it will be thought by many, than useful ; but yet calculated, as it should seem, to impress the mind with a strong sense of the soul's immortality, and separate existence.

The last is miscellaneous. The leading view of it, however, is, to vindicate holy scripture, and some of the great truths it contains, against the aspersions of Dr. Priestley, and other Socinian writers ; at the same time, to recommend to the professors of Christianity, a decisive mode of interpreting the divine writings.



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THE
NATURE AND DESIGN
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

Extracted from a late Author.

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

“ Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?
“ What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame?
“ Earth’s highest station ends in, ‘ *here he lies*.’
“ And ‘ *dust to dust*’ concludes her noblest song.”
YOUNG.

M A C C L E S F I E L D:
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CHRISTIANITY

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THE
NATURE AND DESIGN, &c.

THE wisdom of mankind has for several ages been enquiring into the nature of man, and the nature of the world in which he is placed.

The wants and miseries of human nature, and the vanity of worldly enjoyments, have made it difficult for the wisest men to tell what human happiness was, or wherein it consisted.

It has pleased the infinite goodness of God, to satisfy all our wants and enquiries by a revelation made to the world by his son Jesus Christ.

This revelation has laid open the great secrets of providence from the creation of the world, explained the present state of things, and given man all the information that is necessary to quiet his anxieties, content him with his condition, and lead him safely to everlasting rest and happiness.

It is now only necessary, that the poor wisdom of man do not exalt itself against God, that

we suffer our eyes to be opened by him that made them, and our lives to be conducted by him, in whom *we live, move, and have our being.*

For light is now come into the world, if men are but willing to come out of darkness.

As happiness is the sole end of all our labours, for this divine revelation aims at nothing else.

It gives us right and satisfactory notions of ourselves, of our true good and real evil; it shews us the true state of our condition, both our vanity and excellence, our greatness and meanness, our felicity and misery.

Before this, man was a mere riddle to himself, and his condition full of darkness and perplexity. A restless inhabitant of a miserable disordered world, *walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting himself in vain.*

But this light has dispersed all the anxiety of his vain conjectures; it has brought him acquainted with God, and by adding heaven to earth, and eternity to time, has opened such a glorious view of things, as makes man even in his present condition, full of a peace of God which passeth all understanding.

This revelation acquaints us, that we have a spirit within us, that was created after the divine image, that this spirit is now in a fallen, corrupt condition, that the body in which it is placed, is its grave, or sepulchre, where it is enslaved to fleshly thoughts, blinded

blinded with false notions of good and evil, and dead to all taste and relish of its true happiness.

It teaches us, that the world in which we live, is also in a disordered, irregular state, and cursed for the sake of man; that it is no longer the paradise that God made it, but the remains of a drowned world, full of marks of God's displeasure, and the sin of its inhabitants.

That it is a mere wilderness, a state of darkness, a vale of misery, where vice and madness, dreams and shadows, variously please, agitate, and torment the short, miserable lives of men.

Devils also, and evil spirits, have here their residence, promoting the works of darkness, and wandering up and down, seeking whom they may devour.

So that the condition of man in his natural state, seems to be, as if a person sick of variety of diseases, knowing neither his distempers, nor his cure, should be enclosed in some place, where he could hear, or see, or feel, or taste of nothing, but what tended to inflame his disorders.

The excellency therefore of the christian religion appears in this, that it puts an end to this state of things, blots out all the ideas of worldly wisdom, brings the world itself to ashes, and creates all a-new. It calls man from an animal life and earthly conversation, to be born again of the Holy Ghost, and be made a member of the kingdom of God.

It crushes into nothing the concerns of this life, condemns it as a state of vanity and darkness, and leads man to a happiness with God in the realms of light.

It proposes the purification of our souls, the enlivening us with the Divine Spirit; it sets before us new goods and evils, and forms us to a glorious participation of the divine nature.

This is the one sole end of christianity, to lead us from all thoughts of rest and repose here, to separate us from the world and worldly tempers, to deliver us from the folly of our passions, the slavery of our own natures, the power of evil spirits, and unite us to God, the true fountain of all real good. This is the mighty change which christianity aims at, to put us into a new state, reform our whole natures, purify our souls, and make them the inhabitants of heavenly and immortal bodies.

It does not leave us to grovel on in the desires of the flesh, to cast about for worldly happiness, and wander in darkness and exile from God, but prepares us for the true enjoyment of a divine life.

The manner by which it changes this whole state of things, and raises us to an union with God, is equally great and wonderful.

I am *the way, the truth, and the life*, saith our blessed Saviour, *no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*

As all things were at first created by the Son of God, and without him was *not any thing made that*
was

was made, so are all things again restored and redeemed by the same Divine person.

As nothing could come into being without him, so nothing can enter into a state of happiness or enjoyment of God, but by him.

The price and dignity of this redemption at once confounds the pride, and relieves the misery of man. How fallen must he be from God, how disordered and odious his nature, that should need so great a mediator to recommend his repentance!—And on the other hand, how full of comfort, that so high a method, so stupendous a means should be taken, to restore him to a state of peace and favour with God!

This is the true point of view in which every christian is to behold himself. He is to overlook the poor projects of human life, and consider himself as a creature through his natural corruption falling into a state of endless misery, but by the mercy of God redeemed to a condition of everlasting felicity.

All the precepts and doctrines of the gospel are founded on these two great truths, the deplorable corruption of human nature, and its new birth in Christ Jesus.

The one includes all the misery, the other all the happiness of man.

It is on these great doctrines, that the whole frame of christianity is built, forbidding only such things as fasten us to the disorders of sin, and commanding only those duties which lead us into the liberty and freedom of the sons of God.

The corruption of our nature makes mortification, self-denial, and the death of our bodies necessary. Because human nature must be thus unmade, flesh and blood must be thus changed, before it can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Our new birth makes the reception of God's Spirit, and the participation of the holy sacrament necessary, to form us to that life to which the resurrection of Jesus Christ has entitled us.

So that would we think, and act, and live like christians, we must act suitably to these terms of our condition, fearing and avoiding all the motions of our corrupted nature, cherishing the secret inspirations of the Holy Spirit, opening our minds for the reception of the divine light, and pressing after all the graces and perfections of our new birth.

We must behave ourselves conformably to this double capacity, we must fear, and watch, and pray, like men that are always in danger of eternal death, and we must believe and hope, labour and aspire, like christians, that are called to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

This knowledge of ourselves, makes human life a state of infinite importance, placed upon so dreadful a point betwixt two such eternities.

Well might our blessed Saviour say to one, that begged first to go and bury his father, *Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.*

For

For what is all the bustle and hurry of the world, but dead shew, and its greatest agents, but dead men, when compared with that state of greatness, that real life, to which the followers of Christ are redeemed?

Had we been made only for this world, worldly wisdom had been our highest wisdom; but seeing christianity has redeemed us to a contrary state, since all its goods are in opposition to this life, worldly wisdom is now our greatest foolishness.

It is now our only wisdom to understand our new state aright, to let its goods and evils take possession of our hearts, and conduct ourselves by the principles of our redemption.

The nature and terms of our christian calling is of that concern, as to deserve all our thoughts, and is indeed only to be perceived by great seriousness and attention of mind.

The christian state is an invisible life in the Spirit of God, supported not by sensible goods, but the spiritual graces of faith and hope; so that the natural man, especially while busied in earthly cares and enjoyments, easily forgets that great and heavenly condition in which religion places him.

The changes which christianity maketh in the present state of things, are all invisible; its goods and evils, its dignities and advantages, which are the only true standards of all our actions, and are not subject to the knowledge of our senses.

In

In *God we live, and move, and have our being*, but how unseen, how unfelt is all this!

Christ is the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end of all things. The whole creation subsists in him and by him; nothing is in any order, nor any person in any favour with God but by this great mediator. But how invisible, how unknown to all our senses, is this state of things!

The apostle tells us, that we christians are *come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God; to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, &c.* (a)

But our senses see or feel nothing of this state of glory, they only shew us a society amongst vain and worldly men, labouring and contending for the poor enjoyments of a vain world.

We are temples of the Holy Ghost, consecrated to God, members of Christ's mystical body, of his flesh and of his bones, receiving life, spirit, and motion from him our head.

But our senses see no farther than our parents and kindred according to the flesh, and fix our hearts to earthly friendships and relations.

Religion

(a) Heb. xii. 22.

Religion turns our whole life into a sacrifice to God, a state of probation, from whence we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, &c. (b)

But our senses, the maxims of this life, and the spirit of the world, teach quite another turn of mind; to enjoy the good things of life as our portion, to seek after riches and honours, and to dread nothing so much as poverty, disgrace, and persecution. Well may this life be deemed a state of darkness, since it thus clouds and covers all the true appearances of things, and keeps our minds insensible, and unaffected with matters of such infinite moment.

We must observe, that in scripture christianity is constantly represented to us, as a redemption from the slavery and corruption of our nature, and a raising us to a nearer enjoyment of the divine glory.

It knows of no misery, but the death and misery which sin has made, nor of any happiness, but the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which form us to a greater likeness of God.

Thus saith the apostle, *Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.* (c)

He was manifested to take away our sins. (d)

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this evil world.

The same scriptures teach us, that as we are redeemed from this state of sin, so we are raised to a
new

(b) 2 Cor. v. 9. (c) Tit. ii. 13. (d) 1 Joh. iii. v.

new life in Christ, to a participation of the divine nature, and a fellowship with him in glory.

Thus our blessed Saviour prayeth for all his followers, *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* (e)

Happy he that hath ears to hear, and a heart to feel the majesty and glory of this description of our new life in Christ!

For surely could we understand what our Saviour conceived, when he sent up this prayer to God, our hearts would be always praying, and our souls ever aspiring after this state of perfection, this union with Christ in God.

To proceed; *In my Father's house, saith Christ, are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.* (f)

The apostle tells us, that *as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* (g)

And that when Christ, *who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.* (h)

Beloved, saith St. John, *now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear, what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* (i) I

(e) Joh. xvii. 21 (f) Joh. xiv. 23. (g) 1 Cor. xv.

(h) Col. iii. 4. (i) 1 Joh. iii. 2.

I cannot leave this passage, without adding the apostle's conclusion to it: *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Which teaches this lesson, that no man, whatever he may think of his christian improvement, can be said to have this hope in him, unless he shews it by such a purification of himself, as may resemble the purity of Christ.—But to return.

St. Paul thus breaks forth into the praises of God; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (k)* And again, *God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (l)*

These passages teach us, that christianity introduceth us into a new state, made up of invisible goods, and spiritual blessings, that it so alters our condition, as to give us a new rank and degree even in this life; which the apostle expresses by making us *sit together in heavenly places.*

So that though we are still in the flesh, yet, as the apostle saith, need we know no man after the flesh; though we are still inhabitants of this vale of misery, yet are we ranked and placed in a certain order amongst heavenly beings in Christ Jesus.

Would

(k) Ephes. i. 3.

(l) Ephes. ii. 4. 5.

Would we therefore know our true rank and condition, and what place we belong to, in the order of beings, we must search after a *life that is hid with Christ in God*. We must consider ourselves as parts of Christ's mystical body, and as members of a kingdom of heaven. In vain do we consider the beauty and strength of our bodies, our alliances with men, the privileges of birth, and the distinctions of this world, for these things no more constitute the state of human life, than rich coffins or beautiful monuments, constitute the state of the dead.

We justly pity the last poor efforts of human greatness, when we see a breathless carcass lying in state. It appears to us to be so far from any real honour, that it rather looks like ridiculing the misery of our nature. But were religion to form our judgment, the life of a proud, voluptuous and sensual man, tho' shining in all the splendor of the world, would give us no higher an idea of human dignity, than that of a poor corpse laid in state.

For a sinner, when glorying in *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, shews us a more shocking sight of misery ridiculed, than any pageantry that can expose the dead.

We have an apostle's authority to say, *that he who liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth*.

This shews us, that when we enquire what our life is, or wherein it consists, we must think of something higher than the vigor of our blood, the gaiety
of

of our spirits, or the enjoyment of sensible pleasures; since these, though the allowed signs of living men, are often undeniable proofs of dead christians.

When therefore we would truly know what our life, our state, our dignity, our good, or our evil is, we must look at nothing that is temporal, worldly, or sensible. We may as well dig in the earth for wisdom, as look at flesh and blood, to see what we are, or at worldly enjoyments, to find what we want, or at temporal evils, to see what we have to fear.

Our blessed Saviour put an absolute end to all enquiries of this kind, when he said, *be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.* (a)

Here our bodies and all bodily enjoyments are at one dash struck out of the account of happiness, and the present state of things made so very low, and insignificant, that he who can only deprive us of them, has not power enough to deserve our fear.

We must therefore, if we would conceive our true state, our real good and evil, look farther than the dim eyes of flesh can carry our views, we must, with the eyes of faith, penetrate into the invisible world, the world of spirits, and consider our order and condition amongst them, a world which (as *St. John* speaks) *has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the light of the Lamb.* For it is there, amongst eternal beings,

(a) Luke, xii. 4.

beings, that we must take an eternal fellowship, or fall into a kingdom of darkness and everlasting misery.

Christianity is so divine in its nature, so noble in its ends, so extensive in its views, that it has no less subjects than these, to entertain our thoughts.

It buries our bodies, burns the present world, triumphs over death, by a general resurrection, and opens all into an eternal state.

It never considers us in any other respect, than as fallen spirits; it disregards the distinctions of human society, and proposes nothing to our fears, but eternal misery, nor any thing to our hopes, but an endless enjoyment of the divine nature.

This is the great and important condition in which christianity has placed us; above our bodies, above the world, above death, to be present at the dissolution of all things, to see the earth in flames, and the heavens wrapt up like a scrowl, to stand at the general resurrection, to appear at the universal judgment, and to live forever, when all that our eyes have seen, is passed away and gone.

Take upon thee, therefore, a spirit and temper suitable to this greatness of thy condition; remember that thou art an eternal spirit, that thou art for a few months and years in a state of flesh and blood, only to try whether thou shalt be forever happy with God, or fall into everlasting misery with the devil.

Thou wilt often hear of other concerns, and other greatness in this world; thou wilt see every order of
men,

men, every family, every person pursuing some fancied happiness of his own, as if the world had not only happiness, but a particular kind of happiness for all its inhabitants.

But when thou seest this state of human life, fancy that thou sawest all the world asleep, the prince no longer a prince, the beggar no longer begging, but every man sleeping out of his proper state, some happy, others tormented, and all changing their condition as fast as one foolish dream could succeed another.

When thou hast seen this, thou hast seen all that the world awake can do for thee; if thou wilt, thou mayst go to sleep for a while, thou mayst lie down and dream; for, be as happy as the world can make thee, all is but sleeping and dreaming, and what is still worse, it is like sleeping in a ship when thou shouldst be pumping out the water; or dreaming thou art a prince, when thou shouldst be redeeming thyself from slavery.

Now this is no imaginary flight of a melancholy fancy, that too much exceeds the nature of things, but a sober reflection justly suited to the vanity of worldly enjoyments.

For if the doctrines of christianity are true, if thou art that creature, that fallen spirit, that immortal nature, which religion teaches us, if thou art to meet death, resurrection, and judgment, as the forerunners of an eternal state, what are all the little flashes of
B pleasure

pleasure, the changing appearances of worldly felicity, but so many sorts of dreams?

How canst thou talk of the happiness of riches, the advantages of fortune, the pleasures of apparel, of state, and equipage, without being in a dream?

Is the beggar asleep, when he fancies he is building himself fine houses? Is the prisoner in a dream, when he imagines himself in open fields, and fine groves? And canst thou think, that thy immortal spirit is awake, whilst it is delighting itself in the shadows and bubbles of worldly happiness?

For if it be true, that man is upon his trial, if the trial is for eternity, if life is but a vapour, what is there that deserves a serious thought, but how to get well out of the world, and make it a right passage to our eternal state?

How can we prove that we are awake, that our eyes are open, but by seeing, and feeling, and living according to these important circumstances of our life?

If a man should endeavour to please thee, with fine descriptions of the riches, and pleasures, and dignities, of the world in the moon, adding that its air is always serene, and its seasons always pleasant, wouldest thou not think it a sufficient answer, to say, I am not to live there?

When thy own false heart is endeavouring to please itself with worldly expectations, the joy of this or that way of life, is it not as good a reproof, to say to thyself, I am not to stay here?

For

For where is the difference betwixt an earthly happiness, from which thou art to be separated forever, and a happiness in the moon, to which thou art never to go? Thou art to be forever separated from the earth, thou art to be eternal, when the earth itself is lost, is it not therefore the same vanity to project for happiness on earth, as to propose a happiness in the moon? For as thou art never to go to the one, so thou art to be eternally separated from the other.

Indeed the littleness and insignificancy of the boasted honours of human life, appears sufficiently from the things themselves, without comparing them to the subjects of religion.

For see what they are in themselves.

Ahasuerus, that great prince of the eastern world, puts a question to Haman, his chief minister of state, and asks him, *What shall be done unto the man, whom the king delighteth to honour? (a)*

Haman imagining that he was the person whom the king had in his thoughts, answered in these words:

Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head; and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal, whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and

B 2

proclaim

(a) Esther vi. 6.

proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour!

Here you see the sum total of worldly honours.

An ambitious Haman cannot think of any thing greater to ask; Ahasuerus, the greatest monarch in the world, has nothing greater to give to his greatest favourite; powerful as he is, he can only give such honours as these.

Yet it is to be observed, that if a poor nurse was to please her child, she must talk to it in the same language, she must please it with the same fine things, and gratify its pride with honours of the same kind.

Yet these are the mighty things, for which men forget God, forget their immortality, forget the difference betwixt an eternity in heaven, and an eternity in hell.

There needs no great understanding, no mighty depth of thought, to see through the vanity of all worldly enjoyments; do but talk of them, and you will be forced to talk of gewgaws, of ribbons, and feathers.

Every man sees the littleness of all sorts of honours, but those which he is looking after himself.

A private English gentleman, that is half distracted till he has got some little distinction, does at the same time despise the highest honours of other countries, and would not leave his own condition, to possess the ridiculous greatness of an Indian king. He sees the vanity and falseness of their honours, but forgets that

that all honour placed in external things, is equally vain and false.

He does not consider, that the difference of greatness is only the difference of flowers and feathers; and that they who are dressing themselves with beads, have as just a taste of what adorns their persons, as they who place the same pride in diamonds.

When we read of an eastern prince, that is too great to feed himself, and thinks it a piece of grandeur to have other people put his meat into his mouth, we despise the folly of his pride.

But might we not as well despise the folly of their pride, who are ashamed to use their legs, and think it adds to their state, to be removed from one place to another by other people.

For he that thinks it stately to be carried, and mean to walk on foot, has as true notions of greatness, as he who is too haughty to put his meat into his own mouth.

Again, it is the manner of some countries in the burial of their dead, to put a staff, and shoes, and money, in the sepulchre along with the corpse.

We justly censure the folly and ignorance of such a poor contrivance to assist the dead; but if we did but as truly understand what life is, we should see as much to ridicule in the poor contrivances to assist the living.

For how many things in life do people labour after, break their rest and peace to get, which yet when

gotten, are of as much real use to them, as a staff and shoes to a corpse under ground? They are always adding something to their life, which is only like adding another pair of shoes to a body in the grave.

Thou mayest hire more servants, new paint thy rooms, make more fine beds, eat out of plate, and put on richer apparel, and these will help thee to be happy, as golden staves, or painted shoes, will help a dead man to walk.

See here therefore the true nature of all worldly shew and figure, it will make us as great as those are, who are dreaming that they are kings, as rich as those who fancy that they have estates in the moon, and as happy as those, who are buried with staves in their hands.

Now this is not carrying matters too high, or imposing upon ourselves with any subtilties of reasoning, or sound of words; for the value of worldly riches and honours can no more be too much lessened, than the riches and greatness of the other life can be too much exalted. We don't cheat ourselves out of any real happiness, by looking upon all worldly honours as bubbles, any more than we cheat ourselves by securing honours that are solid and eternal.

There is no more happiness lost by not being great and rich, as those are amongst whom we live, than by not being dressed and adorned as they are, who live in China or Japan.

Thou

Thou art no happier for having painted cieling and marble walls in thy house, than if the same finery was in thy stables; if thou eatest upon plate, it maketh thee just as happy, as if thy horses wore silver shoes.

To disregard gold, jewels, and equipage, is no more running away from any real good, than if we only despised a feather or a garland of flowers.

So that he who condemns all the external shew and state of life as equally vain, is no more deceived, or carried to too high a contempt for the things of this life, than he that only condemns the vanity of the vainest things.

You don't think yourself imposed upon, or talked out of any real happiness, when you are persuaded not to be as vain and ambitious as Alexander.

And can you think that you are imposed upon, or drawn from any real good, by being persuaded to be as meek and lowly as the holy Jesus?

There is as much sober judgment, as sound sense in conforming to the fulness of Christ's humility, as in avoiding the height and extravagance of Alexander's vanity.

Don't therefore think to compound matters, or that it is enough to avoid the vanity of the vainest men. There is as much folly in seeking little as great honours; as great a mistake in needless expence upon thyself, as upon any thing else. Thou must not only be less vain and ambitious than an

Alexander, but practise the humility of the blessed Jesus.

If thou rememberest that the whole race of mankind are a race of fallen spirits, that pass through this world as an arrow passes through the air, thou wilt soon perceive, that all things here are equally great and equally little, and that there is no wisdom or happiness, but in getting away to the best advantage.

If thou rememberest that this life is but a vapor, that thou art in the body, only to be holy, humble, and heavenly-minded, that thou standest upon the brinks of death, resurrection, and judgment, and that these great things will suddenly come upon thee, like a thief in the night, thou wilt see a vanity in all the gifts of fortune, greater than any words can express.

Do but therefore know thyself, as religion has made thee known, do but see thyself in the light which Christ has brought into the world, and then thou wilt see that nothing concerns thee, but what concerns an everlasting spirit that is going to God; and that there are no enjoyments here that are worth a thought, but such as may make thee more perfect in those holy tempers which will carry thee to heaven.

THE END.

THE
EXCELLENCY AND GREATNESS
OF A
RELIGIOUS MIND.

Extracted from a late Author.

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

JESUS CHRIST.

MACCLESFIELD:
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MDCCXC.

THE
EXCELLENCY AND GREATNESS

RELIGIOUS MINISTRY

By the Rev. David Henson

BY THE REV. DAVID HENSON

Those that love the Lord are
and with all of you, and with all of us,
I am sure

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THE
EXCELLENCY and GREATNESS, &c.

BECAUSE in this polite age of ours, we have so lived away the spirit of devotion, that many seem afraid even to be suspected of it, imagining great devotion to be great bigotry, that is founded in ignorance and poorness of spirit; and that little, weak, and dejected minds, are generally the greatest proficient in it.

It shall here be fully shewn, that great devotion is the noblest temper of the greatest and noblest souls; and that they who think it receives any advantage from ignorance and poorness of spirit, are themselves not a little, but entirely ignorant of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of themselves.

People of fine parts and learning, or of great knowledge in worldly matters, may perhaps think it hard to have their want of devotion charged upon their ignorance. But if they will be content to be

tryed by reason and scripture, it may soon be made appear, that a want of devotion, where-ever it is, either amongst the learned or unlearned, is founded in gross ignorance, and the greatest blindness and insensibility that can happen to a rational creature.

And that devotion is so far from being the effect of a little and dejected mind, that it must and will be always highest in the most perfect natures.

And first, Who reckons it a sign of a poor, little mind, for a man to be full of reverence and duty to his parents, to have the truest love and honour for his friend, or to excel in the highest instances of gratitude to his benefactor?

Are not these tempers in the highest degree in the most exalted and perfect minds?

And yet what is high devotion, but the highest exercise of these tempers, of duty, reverence, love, honour, and gratitude to the amiable, glorious parent, friend and benefactor of all mankind?

Is it a true greatness of mind, to reverence the authority of your parents, to fear the displeasure of your friend, to dread the reproaches of your benefactor? And must not this fear, and dread, and reverence, be much more just, and reasonable, and honourable, when they are in the highest degree towards God?

Now as the higher these tempers are, the more are they esteemed amongst men, and are allowed to be so much the greater proofs of a true greatness of mind; so the higher and greater these same tempers
are

are towards God, so much the more do they prove the nobility, excellence, and greatness of the mind.

So that so long as duty to parents, love to friends, and gratitude to benefactors, are thought great and honourable tempers; devotion, which is nothing else but duty, love, and gratitude to God, must have the highest place amongst our highest virtues.

If a prince out of his mere goodness should send you a pardon by one of his slaves, would you think it a part of your duty to receive the slave with marks of love, esteem, and gratitude for his great kindness, in bringing you so great a gift; and at the same time think it a meanness and poorness of spirit, to shew love, esteem, and gratitude to the prince, who of his own goodness freely sent you the pardon?

And yet this would be as reasonable, as to suppose that love, esteem, honour, and gratitude, are noble tempers, and instances of a great soul, when they are paid to our fellow-creatures; but the effects of a poor, ignorant, dejected mind, when they are paid to God.

Farther; that part of devotion which expresses itself in sorrowful confession, and penitential tears of a broken and contrite heart, is very far from being any sign of a little and ignorant mind.

For who does not acknowledge it an instance of an ingenuous, generous, and brave mind, to acknowledge a fault, and ask pardon for any offence? And are not the finest and most improved minds, the most remarkable for this excellent temper? It

Is it not also allowed, that the ingenuity and excellence of a man's spirit is much shewn, when his sorrow and indignation at himself rises in proportion to the folly of his crime, and the goodness and greatness of the person he has offended?

Now if things are thus, then the greater any man's mind is, the more he knows of God and himself, the more will he be disposed to prostrate himself before God in all the humblest acts and expressions of repentance.

And the greater the ingenuity, the generosity, judgment, and penetration of his mind is, the more will he exercise and indulge a passionate, tender sense of God's just displeasure; and the more he knows of the greatness, the goodness, and perfection of the divine nature, the fuller of shame and confusion will he be at his own sins and ingratitude.

And on the other hand, the more dull and ignorant any soul is, the more base and ungenerous it naturally is, the more senseless it is of the goodness and purity of God; so much the more averse will it be to all acts of humble confession and repentance.

Devotion therefore is so far from being best suited to little ignorant minds, that a true elevation of soul, a lively sense of honour, and great knowledge of God and ourselves, are the greatest natural helps that our devotion hath.

And on the other hand, it shall here be made appear by variety of arguments, that indevotion is founded in the most excessive ignorance. And

And, first, Our blessed Lord and his Apostles were eminent instances of great and frequent devotion. Now if we will grant (as all christians must grant) that their great devotion was founded in a true knowledge of the nature of devotion, the nature of God, and the nature of man; then it is plain, that all those that are insensible of the duty of devotion, are in this excessive state of ignorance, they neither know God, nor themselves, nor devotion.

For if a right knowledge in these three respects produces great devotion, as in the case of our Saviour and his Apostles, then a neglect of devotion must be chargeable upon ignorance.

Again: How comes it that most people have recourse to devotion, when they are in sickness, distress, or fear of death? Is it not because this state shews them more of the want of God, and their own weakness, than they perceive at other times? Is it not because their infirmities, their approaching end, convinces them of something which they did not half perceive before?

Now if devotion at these seasons is the effect of a better knowledge of God, and ourselves, then the neglect of devotion at other times is always owing to great ignorance of God and ourselves.

Farther: As indevotion is ignorance, so it is the most shameful ignorance, and such as is to be charged with the greatest folly,

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This will fully appear to any one that considers, by what rules we are to judge of the excellency of any knowledge, or the shamefulnes of any ignorance.

Now knowledge itself would be no excellence, nor ignorance any reproach to us, but that we are rational creatures.

But if this be true, then it follows plainly; that that knowledge which is most suitable to our rational nature, and which most concerns us, as such, to know, is our highest, finest knowledge; and that ignorance which relates to things that are most essential to us, as rational creatures, and which we are most concerned to know, is, of all others, the most gross and shameful ignorance.

If therefore there be any things that concern us more than others, if there be any truths that are more to us than all others, he that has the fullest knowledge of these things, that sees these truths in the clearest, strongest light, has, of all others, as a rational creature, the clearest understanding, and the strongest parts.

If therefore our relation to God be our greatest relation, if our advancement in his favour be our highest advancement, he that has the highest notions of the excellence of this relation, he that most strongly perceives the highest worth, and great value of holiness and virtue, that judges every thing little, when compared with it, proves himself to be master of the best, and most excellent knowledge.

If

If a judge had fine skill in painting, architecture, and music, but at the same time had gross and confused notions of equity, and a poor, dull apprehension of the value of justice, who would scruple to reckon him a poor ignorant judge?

If a bishop should be a man of great address and skill in the arts of preferment, and understanding how to raise and enrich his family in the world, but should have no taste or sense of the maxims and principles of the saints and fathers of the church; if he did not conceive the holy nature, and great obligations of his calling, and judge it better to be crucified to the world, than to live idly in pomp and splendor, who would scruple to charge such a bishop with want of understanding?

If we do not judge, and pronounce after this manner, our reason and judgment are but empty sounds.

But now, if a judge is to be reckoned ignorant, if he does not feel or perceive the value and worth of justice; if a bishop is to be looked upon as void of understanding, if he is more experienced in other things, than in the exalted virtues of his apostolical calling; then all common christians are to be looked upon as more or less knowing, according as they know more or less of these great things, which are the common and greatest concern of all christians.

If a gentleman should fancy that the moon is no bigger than it appears to the eye, that it shines with its own light, that all the stars are only so many spots of light; if after reading books of astronomy, he

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should

should still continue in the same opinion, most people would think he had but a poor apprehension.

But if the same person should think it better to provide for a short life here, than to prepare for a glorious eternity hereafter, that it is better to be rich than to be eminent in piety, his ignorance and dulness, would be too great to be compared to any thing else.

There is no knowledge that deserves so much as the name of it, but that which we call judgment.

And that is the most clear and improved understanding, which judges best of the value and worth of things, all the rest is but the capacity of an animal, it is but mere seeing and hearing.

And there is no excellence of any knowledge in us, until we exercise our judgment, and judge well of the value and worth of things.

If a man had eyes that could see beyond the stars, or pierce into the heart of the earth, but could not see the things that were before him, or discern any thing that was serviceable to him, we should reckon that he had but a very bad sight.

If another had ears that received sounds from the world in the moon, but could hear nothing that was said or done upon earth, we should look upon him to be as bad as deaf.

In like manner, if a man has a memory that can retain a great many things; if he has a wit that is sharp and acute in arts and sciences, or an imagination that can wander agreeably in fictions, but has a
dull

dull, poor apprehension of his duty and relation to God, of the value of piety, or the worth of moral virtue, he may very justly be reckoned to have a bad understanding. He is but like the man that can only see and hear such things as are of no benefit to him.

As certain therefore as piety, virtue, and eternal happiness are of the most concern to man, as certain as the immortality of our nature, and relation to God, are the most glorious circumstances of our nature, so certain is it, that he who dwells most in contemplation of them, whose heart is most affected with them, who sees farthest into them, who judges all worldly attainments to be mere bubbles and shadows, in comparison of them, proves himself to have of all others the finest understanding, and the strongest judgment.

And if we don't reason after this manner, or allow this method of reasoning, we have no arguments to prove, that there is any such thing as a wise man, or a fool.

For a man is proved to be a natural, not because he wants any of his senses, or is incapable of every thing, but because he has no judgment, and is entirely ignorant of the worth and value of things; he will perhaps chuse a fine coat, rather than a large estate.

And as the essence of stupidity consists in the entire want of judgment, in an ignorance of the value of things; so, on the other hand, the essence of wisdom

and knowledge must consist in the excellency of our judgment, or in the knowledge of the worth and value of things.

This therefore is an undeniable proof, that he who knows most of the value of the best things, who judges most rightly of the things which are of most concern to him, who had rather have his soul in a state of christian perfection, than the greatest share of worldly happiness, has the highest wisdom, and is at the farthest distance from men that are naturals, that any knowledge can place him.

On the other hand, he that can talk the learned languages, and repeat a great deal of history, but prefers the indulgence of his body to the purity and perfection of his soul, who is more concerned to get a name, or an estate here, than to live in eternal glory hereafter, is in the nearest state of that natural, who chuses a painted coat, rather than a large estate.

He is not called a natural by men, but he must appear to God, and heavenly Beings, as in a more excessive state of stupidity, and will sooner or latter certainly appear so to himself.

But now if this be undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be a fool, but by shewing that he has no knowledge of things that are good, and evil to himself, then it is undeniably plain, that we cannot prove a man to be wise, but by shewing that he has the fullest knowledge of things that are his greatest good, and his greatest evil.

If

If therefore God be our greatest good; if there can be no good but in his favour, nor any evil but in departing from him, then it is plain, that he who judges it the best thing he can do to please God to the utmost of his power, who worships and adores him with all his heart and soul, who had rather have a pious mind, than all the dignities and honours in the world, shews himself to be in the highest state of human wisdom.

To proceed: We know how our blessed Lord acted in an human body; it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in heaven.

And if any number of heavenly spirits were to leave their habitations in the light of God, and be for a while united to human bodies, they would certainly tend towards God in all their actions, and be as heavenly as they could in a state of flesh and blood.

They would certainly act in this manner, because they would know that God was the only good of all spirits; and that whether they were in the body or out of the body, in heaven, or on earth, they must have every degree of their greatness and happiness from God alone.

All human spirits therefore, the more exalted they are, the more they know their divine original, the nearer they come to heavenly spirits, by so much the more will they live to God in all their actions, and make their whole life a state of devotion.

Devotion therefore is the greatest sign of a great and noble genius, it supposes a soul in its highest state of knowledge; and none but little and blinded minds that are sunk into ignorance and vanity, are destitute of it.

If an human spirit should imagine some mighty prince to be greater than God, we should take it for a poor ignorant creature; all people would acknowledge such an imagination to be the height of stupidity.

But if the same human spirit should think it better to be devoted to some mighty prince, than to be devoted to God, would not this still be a greater proof of a poor, ignorant, and blinded nature?

Yet this is what all people do, who think any thing better, greater, or wiser, than a devout life.

So that which way soever we consider this matter, it plainly appears, that devotion is an instance of great judgment, of an elevated nature; and the want of devotion is a certain proof of the want of understanding.

The greatest spirits of the heathen world, such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, &c. owed all their greatness to the spirit of devotion.

They were full of God; their wisdom and deep contemplations tended only to deliver men from the vanity of the world, the slavery of bodily passions, that they might act as spirits that came from God, and were soon to return to him.

Again

Again: To see the dignity and greatness of a devout spirit, we need only compare it with other tempers that are chosen in the room of it.

St. John tells us, that all in the world (that is, all the tempers of a worldly life) *is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*

Let us therefore consider, what wisdom or excellency of mind there is required to qualify a man for these delights.

Let us suppose a man given up to the pleasures of the body; surely this can be no sign of a fine mind, or an excellent spirit: for if he has but the temper of an animal, he is great enough for these enjoyments.

Let us suppose him to be devoted to honours and splendors, to be fond of glitter and equipage; now if this temper required any great parts or fine understanding to make a man capable of it, it would prove the world to abound with great wits.

Let us suppose him to be in love with riches, and to be so eager in the pursuit of them, as never to think he has enough; now this passion is so far from supposing any excellent sense, or great understanding, that blindness and folly are the best supports that it hath.

Let us lastly suppose him in another light, not singly devoted to any of these passions, but as it mostly happens, governed by all of them in their

turns; does this shew a more exalted nature, than to spend his days in the service of any one of them?

For to have a taste for these things, and to be devoted to them, is so far from arguing any tolerable parts or understanding, that they are suited to the dullest, weakest minds, and require only a great deal of pride and folly to be greatly admired.

But now let libertines bring any such charge as this, if they can, against devotion. They may as well endeavour to charge light with every thing that belongs to darkness.

Let them but grant that there is a God, and Providence, and then they have granted enough to justify the wisdom, and support the honour of devotion.

For if there is an infinitely wise and good Creator, in whom we live, move, and have our being, whose providence governs all things in all places, surely it must be the highest act of our understanding to conceive rightly of him; it must be the noblest instance of judgment, the most exalted temper of our nature, to worship and adore this universal Providence, to conform to its laws, to study its wisdom, and to live and act every where, as in the presence of this infinitely good and wise Creator.

Now he that lives thus, lives in the spirit of devotion.

And what can shew such great parts, and so fine an understanding, as to live in this temper?

For

For if God is wisdom, surely he must be the wisest man in the world, who most conforms to the wisdom of God, who best obeys his providence, who enters farthest into his designs, and does all he can, that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

A devout man makes a true use of his reason; he sees through the vanity of the world, discovers the corruption of his nature, and the blindness of his passions. He lives by a law which is not visible to vulgar eyes; he enters into the world of spirits; he compares the greatest things; sets eternity against time; and chooses rather to be forever great in the presence of God when he dies, than to have the greatest share of worldly pleasure whilst he lives.

He that is devout, is full of these great thoughts; he lives upon these noble reflections, and conducts himself by rules and principles, which can only be apprehended, admired, and loved by reason.

There is nothing therefore that shews so great a genius, nothing that so raises us above vulgar spirits, nothing that so plainly declares an heroic greatness of mind, as great devotion.

When you suppose a man to be a saint, or all devotion, you have raised him as much above all other conditions of life as a philosopher is above an animal.

Lastly: Courage and bravery are words of a great sound, and seem to signify an heroic spirit; but yet
humility

humility, which seems to be the lowest, meanest part of devotion, is a more certain argument of a noble and courageous mind.

For humility contends with greater enemies, is more constantly engaged, more violently assaulted, bears more, suffers more, and requires greater courage to support itself, than any instances of worldly bravery.

A man that dares be poor and contemptible in the eyes of the world, to approve himself to God; that resists and rejects all human glory, that opposes the clamour of his passions, that meekly puts up all injuries and wrongs, and dares stay for his reward 'till the invisible hand of God gives to every one their proper places, endures a much greater trial, and exerts a nobler fortitude, than he that is bold and daring in the fire of battle.

For the boldness of a soldier, if he is a stranger to the spirit of devotion, is rather weakness than fortitude; it is at best but mad passion, and heated spirits, and has no more true valour in it than the fury of a tyger.

For as we cannot lift up a hand, or stir a foot, but by a power that is lent us from God; so bold actions that are not directed by the laws of God, as so many executions of his will, are no more true bravery, than sedate malice is christian patience.

Reason

Reason is our universal law, that obliges us in all places, and at all times; and no actions have any honour, but so far as they are instances of our obedience to reason.

And it is as base and cowardly, to be bold and daring against the principle of reason and justice, as to be bold and daring in lying and perjury.

Would we therefore exercise a true fortitude, we must do all in the spirit of devotion, be valiant against the corruptions of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil: for to be daring and courageous against these enemies, is the noblest bravery that an human mind is capable of.

In short; there is nothing wise, or great, or noble in an human spirit, but rightly to know, and heartily worship and adore the great God, that is the support and life of all spirits, whether in heaven or on earth.

T H E E N D.



Reason is our universal law, that obliges us in all places, and at all times; and no actions have any honour, but so far as they are instances of our obedience to reason.

And it is a base and cowardly, to be bold and daring against the principle of reason and justice, as to be bold and daring in lying and perjury.

Would we therefore exercise a true fortitude, we must do all in the spirit of devotion, be valiant against the corruptions of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil: for to be daring and courageous against these enemies, is the nobility that an human mind is capable of.

In short, there is nothing wise, or great, or noble in an human spirit, but rightly to know, and hear the word of God, and above the great God, that is the Supreme and life of all things, whether in heaven or on earth.

THE END.

PORTRAITS

OF

HUMAN CHARACTERS,

WITH

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS.

Extracted from a late Author,

AND

ADDRESSED TO ALL ORDERS OF MEN.

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

Veluti in Speculo.

If the Cap fits, put it on.

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PORTRAITS

HUMAN CHARACTERS

WITH

OCCASIONAL REFLECTIONS

THE following Characters are drawn by a very pious and masterly pen, and appear calculated to call the attention of mankind inward, and to do them good. With this view they are selected from the larger works of the Author, and presented to the Reader in this new form, by his affectionate humble servant,

The Editor.

Macclesfield,

August 25th. 1790.

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P O R T R A I T S

OF HUMAN CHARACTERS, &c.

I. *Character of Calidus.*

CALIDUS has traded above thirty years in the the greatest city of the kingdom; and has been so many years constantly increasing his trade and his fortune. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of business; and though he eats and drinks very heartily, yet every meal seems to be in a hurry, and he would say grace if he had time. *Calidus* ends every day at the tavern; but he has not leisure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good hearty glass, to drive thoughts of business out of his head, and make his spirits drowsy enough for sleep. He does business all the time he is rising, and has settled several matters before he can get to his counting house. His prayers are a short ejaculation or two, which he never misses in stormy, tempestuous weather, because he has always something or other

at

at sea. *Calidus* will tell you with great pleasure, that he has been in this hurry for many years, and that it must have killed him long ago, but that it has been a rule with him, to get out of the town every Saturday, and make the Sunday a day of quiet and good refreshment in the country.

He is now so rich, that he would leave off his business, and amuse his old age with building and furnishing a fine house in the country; but that he is afraid he shall grow melancholy, if he was to quit his business. He will tell you with great gravity, that it is a dangerous thing for a man that has been used to get money, ever to leave it off. If thoughts of religion happen at any time to steal into his head, *Calidus* contents himself with thinking, that he never was a friend to heretics and infidels; that he has always been civil to the minister of the parish, and very often given something to the charity-school.

REFLECTIONS.

This way of life is at such a distance from all the doctrine and discipline of christianity, that no one can live in it through ignorance or frailty. *Calidus* can no more imagine, that *he is born again of the spirit*; that *he is in Christ a new creature*; that *he lives here a stranger and pilgrim, setting his affections upon things above, and laying up treasures in heaven*; he can no more imagine this, than he can think that he has been all his life an apostle, working miracles, and preaching the gospel.

Character

II. Character of *Mundanus*.

MUNDANUS is a man of excellent parts, and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of trade and business that has fallen in his way, has had some improvement from him; and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing any thing well, to its greatest height. *Mundanus* aims at the greatest perfection in every thing. The soundness and strength of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, makes him intent upon removing all imperfections.

He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of trade, building, or improving land or manufactures. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving, by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying every thing every way, has rendered him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has *Mundanus* gone on, increasing his knowledge and judgment, as fast as his years came upon him.

The one only thing, which has not fallen under his improvement, nor received any benefit from his judicious mind, is his devotion: This is just in the same poor state it was, when he was only six years

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of

of age; and the old man prays now, in that little form of words, which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning.

This *Mundanus*, that hardly ever saw the poorest utensil, or ever took the meanest trifle into his hand, without considering how it might be made, or used to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner, as when he was a child; without ever considering how much better, or oftener he might pray; without considering how improveable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is, that our prayers should be enlarged, varied, and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives.

If *Mundanus* sees a book of devotion, he passes it by, as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago under his mother, when he learnt to spell.

REFLECTIONS.

Now how poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in every thing, but that which is the whole wisdom of man?

And how miserably do many people, more or less, imitate this conduct?

Character

III. *Character of Negotius.*

NEGOTIUS is a temperate, honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has by his own management made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past, he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of Europe. The general good of trade seems to *Negotius* to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in church or state, is admired, commended, or condemned, with some regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him, so he often lets it go in various kinds of expence and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution. If a purse is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a plate for a horse race, or to redeem a prisoner out of jail, you are always sure of having something from him.

He has given a fine ring of bells to a church in the country; and there is much expectation, that he will some time or other make a more beautiful front to the market-house, than has yet been seen in any place. For it is the generous spirit of *Negotius* to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is, that has secured *Negotius* from all scandalous vices, it is the same thing that has kept him from all strictness of devotion, it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any courses of rakery, or to feel the necessity of an inward solid piety.

For this reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery, and the pleasures of piety, with the same indifference; and has no more desire of living in the one than in the other, because neither of them consist with that turn of mind, and multiplicity of business, which are his happiness.

If *Negotius* was asked, what it is which he drives at in life? he would be as much at a loss for an answer, as if he was asked, what any other person is thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head, which are the motives of his actions; yet he cannot tell you of any one general end of life, that he has chosen with deliberation, as being truly worthy of all his labours and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head, which have been a long time there; such as these, viz. That it is something great to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands

hands than an hundred of the same profession; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give *Negotius* the greatest life and spirits, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

The generality of people, when they think of happiness, think upon *Negotius*, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet; sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous, and charitable.

REFLECTIONS.

Let it now be supposed, that this same *Negotius* was a painful, laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank nor debauched; but was sober and regular in his business. Let it be supposed that he grew old in this course of trading; and that the end and design of all this labour, and care, and application to business, was only this that he might die possessed of more than a hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs, and as many great coats.

Let it be supposed, that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead, that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs when he died.

Now if this was really the case, I believe it would be readily granted, that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous, as any that can be invented: But it would puzzle any one to shew, that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry, that he might die, as it is said, worth an hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he, who has taken the same pains to have as many pair of boots and spurs when he leaves the world.

For if the temper and state of our souls be our whole state; if the only end of life be to die as free from sin, and as exalted in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, so naked are we to return, and to stand a trial before Christ, and his holy angels, for everlasting happiness or misery; what can it possibly signify, what a man had, or had not, in this world? What can it signify what you call those things which a man has left behind him; whether you call them his, or any one's else; whether you call them trees or fields, or birds and feathers; whether you call them an hundred thousand pounds, or an hundred thousand pair of boots and spurs; I say, call them; for the things signify no more to him than the names.

Now it is easy to see the folly of a life thus spent, to furnish a man with such a number of boots and spurs. But yet there needs no better faculty of see-

ing

ing, no finer understanding, to see the folly of a life spent in making a man a possessor of ten towns before he dies.

For if when he has got all his towns, or all his boots, his soul is to go to his own place amongst separate spirits, and his body be laid by in a coffin, till the last trumpet calls him to judgment; where the enquiry will be, how humbly, how devoutly, how purely, how meekly, how piously, how charitably, how heavenly we have spoke, thought, and acted, whilst we were in the body; how can we say, that he who has wore out his life in raising an hundred thousand pounds, has acted wiser for himself, than he who has had the same care to procure an hundred thousand of any thing else?

But farther: Let it now be supposed, that *Negativus*, when he first entered into business, happening to read the Gospel with attention, and eyes open, found that he had a much greater business upon his hands, than that to which he had served an apprenticeship: that there were things which belong to man, of much more importance than all that our eyes can see; so glorious, as to deserve all our thoughts; so dangerous, as to need all our care; and so certain, as never to deceive the faithful labourer.

Let it be supposed, that from reading this book, he had discovered that his soul was more to him than his body; that it was better to grow in the vir-

tues of the soul, than to have a large body, or a full purse; that it was better to be fit for heaven, than to have variety of fine houses upon the earth; that it was better to secure an everlasting happiness, than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep; better live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and self denial, than to die unprepared for judgment; better to be most like our Saviour, or some eminent saint, than to excel all the tradesmen in the world, in business and bulk of fortune.

Let it be supposed that *Negotius* believing these things to be true, entirely devoted himself to God at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his business no farther than was consistent with great devotion, humility, and self-denial; and for no other ends, but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could, to the souls and bodies of his fellow creatures.

Let it therefore be supposed, that instead of the continual hurry of business, he was frequent in his retirements, and a strict observer of all the hours of prayer: that instead of restless desires after more riches, his soul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, constantly watching against worldly tempers, and always aspiring after divine grace; that instead of worldly cares and contrivances, he was busy in fortifying his soul against all approaches of sin; that instead of costly shew, and
expensive

expensive generosity of a splendid life, he loved and exercised all instances of humility and lowliness; that instead of great treats and full tables, his house only furnished a sober refreshment to those that wanted it.

Let it be supposed, that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy: that his piety made him thankful to God in all crosses and disappointments: that his charity kept him from being rich, by a continual distribution to all objects of compassion.

Now had this been the christian spirit of *Negotius*, can any one say, that he had lost the true joy and happiness of life, by thus conforming to the spirit, and living up to the hopes of the gospel?

Can it be said, that a life made exemplary by such virtues as these, which keep heaven always in our sight, which both delight and exalt the soul here, and prepare it for the presence of God hereafter, must be poor and dull, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither stay with us, nor we with them?

IV. *Character of Penitens.*

PENITENS was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him; at which time he spake thus to them:

I see, says he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you now have about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts, than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate.

These things are now sunk into such mere nothings that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days, or hours, I am to leave this carcase to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or

eternally

eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of every thing else?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too wise and busy to be at leisure for these reflections?

When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich; but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity; not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

For what is there miserable or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does any thing signify to him, but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend Lepidus died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a feast; do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feasts, and business, and pleasures

pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul, that is separated from the body, no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a feast.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven, before I had made a few more bargains, or stood a little longer behind a counter?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying on a poor bed in a garret?

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of state?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know, that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a poor or stately apartment.

The

The greatness of those things which follow death, makes all that goes before it sink into nothing.

Now that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness, than the cloaths that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how am I surprized, that I have not always had these thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life?

What a strange thing it is, that a little health, or the poor business of a shop, should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with myself, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time surprized with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, these at suits at law, those at gaming tables, some on the road, others at their own fire sides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs

designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

Oh my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you; that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You, perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self condemnation at the approach of death.

But

But alas! what a poor thing is it, to have lived only free from murder, theft, and adultery, which is all that I can say of myself.

You know indeed, that I have never been reckoned a sot; but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my intemperance, sensuality, and great indulgence. And if I am now going to a judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but good works, I may well be concerned, that though I am no sot, yet I have no christian sobriety to plead for me.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worship and service on sundays when I was neither too idle, or not otherwise disposed of by my business and pleasures. But then, my conformity to the public worship has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of doing that, which the service of the Church supposes; had it not been so, I had been oftener at church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprizes me above all wonder, is this; that I never had so much as a general intention of living up to the piety of the Gospel. This never so much as entered into my head, or my heart. I never once in my life considered, whether I was living as the laws of religion direct, or whether my way of life was such, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And

And can it be thought, that I have kept the gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as intending in any serious and deliberate manner either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought, that I have pleased God with such a life as he requires, though I have lived without ever considering what he requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thoughts about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection, I have done every thing by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail, and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of rules and methods, and diligence in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of piety?

Do

Do you think any thing can astonish, and confound a dying man like this? what pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays this folly to his charge; when it shall shew him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters, that are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment, as no heart can sufficiently conceive them!

Had I only my frailties and imperfections to lament at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a frailty or imperfection, when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a course of piety, as in the business of my trade?

I could have called in as many helps; have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so intended and desired it.

Oh my friends, a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a convulsion, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost.

REFLECTIONS.

Now if every reader would imagine this *Penitens* to have been some particular acquaintance or relation of his, and fancy that he saw and heard all that is here described; that he stood by his bed-side when his poor friend lay in such distress and agony, lamenting the folly of his past life; it would, in all probability, teach him such wisdom as never entered into his heart before. If to this he should consider, how often he himself might have been surprized in the same state of negligence, and made an example to the rest of the world; this double reflection, both upon the distress of his friend, and the goodness of that God who had preserved him from it, would in all likelihood soften his heart into holy tempers, and make him turn the remainder of his life into a regular course of piety.

V. Character of Julius.

Julius is very fearful of missing prayers; all the parish supposes *Julius* to be sick, if he is not at church. But if you was to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by humour or chance? why he is the companion of the silliest people in their most silly pleasures? why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion? If you was to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him? why he is busy at all balls and assemblies? why he gives himself up to an idle gossiping conversation? why he lives in foolish friendships and fondness for particular persons, that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness? why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons, without considering that he is to love every body as himself? If you ask him why he never puts his conversation, his time, and fortune, under the rules of religion; *Julius* has no more to say for himself, than the most disorderly person. For the whole tenor of scripture lies as directly against such a life, as against debauchery and intemperance: He that lives in such a course of idleness and folly, lives no more according to the religion of Jesus Christ, than he that lives in gluttony and intemperance.

If a man was to tell *Julius* that there was no occasion for so much constancy at prayers, and that he might without any harm to himself, neg-

lect the service of the church, as the generality of people do, *Julius* would think such a one to be no christian, and that he ought to avoid his company. But if a person only tells him, he may live as the generality of the world does, that he may enjoy himself as others do, that he may spend his time and money as people of fashion do, that he may conform to the follies and frailties of the generality, and gratify his tempers and passions as most people do; *Julius* never suspects that man to want a christian spirit, or that he is doing the devil's work.

And yet if *Julius* was to read all the New Testament from the beginning to the end, he would find his course of life condemned in every page of it.

VI. Character of *Flatus*.

FLATUS is rich and in health, yet always uneasy, and always searching after happiness. Every time you visit him, you find some new project in his head, he is eager upon it as something that is more worth his while, and will do more for him, than any thing that is already past. Every new thing so seizes him, that if you was to take him from it, he would think himself quite undone. His sanguine temper, and strong passions, promise him so much happiness in every thing, that he is always cheated, and is satisfied with nothing.

At

At his first setting out in life, fine cloaths were his delight, his enquiry was only after the best taylor, and peruke-makers, and he had no thoughts of excelling in any thing but dress. He spared no expence, but carried every nicety to its greatest height. But this happiness not answering his expectations, he left off his brocades, put on a plain coat, railed at fops and beaus, and gave himself up to gaming with great eagerness.

This new pleasure satisfied him for some time, he envied no other way of life. But being by the fate of play drawn into a duel, where he narrowly escaped death, he left off the dice, and sought for happiness no longer amongst the gamesters.

The next thing that seized his wandering imagination, was the diversions of the town; and for more than a twelvemonth, you heard him talk of nothing, but ladies, drawing-rooms, birth-nights, plays, balls, and assemblies. But growing sick of these, he had recourse to hard drinking. Here he had many a merry night, and met with stronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of setting up his staff, and looking out no farther; but unluckily falling into a fever, he grew angry at all strong liquors, and took his leave of the happiness of being drunk.

The next attempt after happiness, carried him into the field; for two or three years nothing was so happy as hunting; he entered upon it with all his soul, and leaped more hedges and ditches than ever had been known in so short a time. You never saw him but in a green coat; he was the envy of all that blow the horn, and always spoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home in a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the surprizing accidents of the last noble chase. No sooner had *Flatus* outdone all the world in the breed and education of his dogs, built new kennels, new stables, and bought a new hunting seat, but he immediately got sight of another happiness, hated the senseless noise and hurry of hunting, gave away his dogs, and was for sometime after deep in the pleasures of building.

Now he invents new kinds of dove-cotes, and has such contrivances in his barns and stables, as were never seen before; he wonders at the dulness of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of architecture, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends, that he never was so delighted in any thing in his life; that he has more happiness amongst his brick and mortar, than ever he had at court; and he is contriving how to have some little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

The

The next year he leaves his house unfinished, complains to every body of masons and carpenters, and devotes himself wholly to the happiness of riding about. After this, you can never see him but on horseback, and so highly delighted with this new way of life, that he would tell you, give him but his horse and a clean country to ride in, and you might take all the rest to yourself. A variety of new saddles and bridles, and a great change of horses, added much to the pleasures of this new way of life. But, however, having, after some time, tired both himself and his horses, the happiest thing he could think of next, was to go abroad and visit foreign countries; and there indeed happiness exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneasy that he had begun so fine a life no sooner. The next month he returned home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of foreigners.

After this, he was a great student for one whole year; he was up early and late at his Italian grammar, that he might have the happiness of understanding the opera, whenever he should hear one, and not be like those unreasonable people, that are pleased with they know not what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwise, just as his affairs happen to be when you visit him; if you find him when some project is almost wore out, you will find a peevish ill-bred man; but if you had seen him

just as he entered upon his riding regimen, or began to excel in sounding of the horn, you had been saluted with great civility.

Flatus is now at a full stand, and is doing what he never did in his life before, he is reasoning and reflecting with himself. He looses several days, in considering which of his cast-off ways of life he should try again.

But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon herbs, and running about the country, to get himself into as good wind as any running footman in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS.

If people were to divide their lives into particular stages, and ask themselves what they were pursuing, or what it was which they had chiefly in view, when they were twenty years old, what at twenty five, what at thirty, what at forty, what at fifty, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people will find, that they had liked and disliked, and pursued as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of *Flatus*.

And thus it must necessarily be, more or less, with all those who propose any other happiness, than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But,

But, secondly, let it be granted, that the generality of people are not of such restless, fickle tempers as *Flatus*; the difference then is only this, *Flatus* is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state; they do not leave gaming, and then fall to hunting. But they have so much steadiness in their tempers, that some seek after no other happiness, but that of heaping up riches; others grow old in the sports of the field; others are content to drink themselves to death, without the least enquiry after any other happiness.

Now is there any thing more happy or reasonable, in such a life as this, than in the life of *Flatus*? Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another, as to be nothing else but a gatherer of money, a hunter, a gamester, or a drunkard, all your life?

VII. Character of *Succus*.

Would you know what a happiness it is, to be governed by the wisdom of religion, and be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of *Succus*, whose greatest happiness is a good night's rest in bed, and a good meal when he is up. When he talks of happiness, it is always in
such

such expressions, as shew you, that he has only his bed and his dinner in his thoughts.

This regard to his meals and repose, makes *Succus* order all the rest of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no business that may hurry his spirits, or break in upon his hours of eating and rest. If he reads, it shall only be for half an hour, because that is sufficient to amuse the spirits; and he will read something that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its food and rest. Or if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he always has recourse to a useful treatise upon the ancient cookery. *Succus* is an enemy to all party matters, having made it an observation, that there is as good eating amongst the Whigs as the Tories.

He talks coolly and moderately upon all subjects, and is as fearful of falling into a passion, as of catching cold; being very positive, that they are both equally injurious to the stomach. If ever you see him more hot than ordinary, it is upon some provoking occasion, when the dispute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of some beloved dish, which has often made him happy. But he has been so long upon these subjects, is so well acquainted with all that can be said on both sides, and has so often answered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus

Succus is very loyal, and as soon as ever he likes any wine, he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unless he should live to see a proclamation against eating of pheasants eggs.

All the hours that are not devoted either to repose, or nourishment, are looked upon by *Succus* as waste or spare time. For this reason he lodges near a coffee-house and a tavern, that when he rises in the morning he may be near the news, and when he parts at night, he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always see him in the same place in the coffee-room, and if he seems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is because some criminal is broke out of newgate, or some lady was robbed last night, but they cannot tell where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to settle the matter with the barber's boy, that comes to shave him.

The next waste time that lies upon his hands, is from dinner to supper. And if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head, it is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep, because he has heard it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forced to refuse so welcome a guest.

But

But here he is soon relieved by a settled method of playing at cards, till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper.

After this, *Succus* takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the English constitution, and praises that minister the most, who keeps the best table.

On a Sunday night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the town rakes; and the bitterest thing that he says against them, is this, that he verily believes, some of them are so abandoned as not to have a regular meal, or a sound night's sleep in a week.

At eleven *Succus* bids all good night, and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning.

If you was to live with *Succus* for a twelve-month, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few curses and oaths that he uses as occasion offers.

REFLECTIONS.

Who can help blessing God for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory, when he sees what variety of folly they sink into, who live without it? Who would not heartily engage in all the labours and exercises of a pious life, be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord; when he sees what dull sensuality, what poor views, what gross enjoyments they are left to, who seek for happiness in other ways?

So

So that whether we consider the greatness of religion, or the littleness of all other things, and the meanness of all other enjoyments, there is nothing to be found in the whole nature of things for a thoughtful mind to rest upon, but a happiness in the hopes of religion.

VIII. Character of Fulvius.

FULVIUS has had a learned education, and taken his degrees in the university, he came from thence, that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him, nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business, calls people to the careful performance and just discharge of its several duties. When he is grave, he will tell you, that he did not enter into holy orders, because he looked upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and that it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you that he never intends to marry, because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life, and good behaviour, which he takes to be the duty of those that are at the head of a family. He refused to be godfather to his nephew, because he will have no trust of any kind to answer for.

Fulvius

Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most idle, impertinent, and careless life.

He has no religion, no devotion, no pretences to piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well, because he is neither a priest, nor a father, nor a guardian, nor has any employment or family to look after.

But, *Fulvius*, you are a rational creature, and as such are as much obliged to live according to reason and order, as a priest is obliged to attend at the altar, or a guardian to be faithful to his trust; if you live contrary to reason, you do not commit a small crime, you do not break a small trust; but you break the law of your nature, you rebel against God who gave you that nature, and put yourself amongst those whom the God of reason and order will punish as apostates and deserters.

Though you have no employment, yet as you are baptized into the profession of Christ's religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holiness of the christian spirit, and perform all the promises made at your baptism, as any man is obliged to be honest and faithful in his calling. If you abuse this great calling, you are not false in a small matter, but you abuse the precious blood of Christ; you crucify the Son of God afresh; you neglect the high-

est

est instances of divine goodness; you disgrace the church of God; you blemish the body of Christ; you abuse the means of grace, and the promises of glory; and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

REFLECTIONS.

It is great folly, for any one to think himself at liberty to live as he pleases, because he is not in such a state of life as some others are: for if there is any thing dreadful in the abuse of any trust; if there is any thing to be feared for the neglect of any calling, there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong use of our reason, nor any thing more to be dreaded, than the neglect of our christian calling; which is not to serve the little uses of a short life, but to redeem souls unto God, to fill heaven with saints, and finish a kingdom of eternal glory unto God.

No man therefore must think himself excused from the exactness of piety and morality, because he has chosen to be idle, and independent in the world; for the necessities of a reasonable and a holy life, are not founded in the several conditions and employments of this life, but in the immutable nature of God, and the nature of man. A man is not to be reasonable and holy, because he is a priest, or a father of a family; but he is to be a pious priest, and a
good

good father, because piety and goodness are the laws of human nature. Could any man please God, without living according to reason and order, there would be nothing displeasing to God in an idle priest, or a reprobate father. He therefore that abuses his reason, is like him that abuses the priesthood; and he that neglects the holiness of the christian life, is as the man that disregards the most important trust.

IX. Character of Octavius.

OCTAVIUS is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of literature, and no stranger to any kingdom in Europe. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering fever, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends.

My glass, says he, is almost run out; and your eyes see how many marks of age and death I bear about me: but I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers by may imagine. I fully believe, that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man, who had but a year longer to live; when *Octavius* proceeded in

this

this manner: For these reasons, says he, my friends, I have left off all taverns, the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I must now be nice in what I drink; I cannot pretend to do, as I have done; and therefore am resolved to furnish my own cellar with a little of the very best; though it cost me ever so much.

I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be wise in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices.

You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four cheerful, diverting companions, is all that I now desire; because I find, that in my present infirmities, if I am left alone, or to grave company, I am not so easy to myself.

A few days after *Octavius* had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a nurse, who closed his eyes before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

REFLECTIONS.

Young *Eugenius*, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God.

I never, says *Eugenius*, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion, as when I saw how poorly and meanly the learned *Octavius*

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was

was to leave the world, through the want of it.

How often had I envied his great learning, his skill in languages, his knowledge of antiquity, his address, and fine manner of expressing himself upon all subjects! But when I saw how poorly it all ended, what was to be the last year of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the joys and expectations of piety; I was thoroughly convinced, that there was nothing to be envied or desired, but a life of true piety; nor any thing so poor and comfortless, as a death without it.

X. Character of Classicus.

CLASSICUS is a man of learning, and well versed in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much, that he has entered into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind, that if he lights of a young scholar, he never fails to advise him concerning his studies.

Classicus

Classicus tells his young man, he must not think that he has done enough, when he has only learnt languages; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of taste and judgment.

How wise might *Classicus* have been, and how much good might he have done in the world, if he had but thought as justly of devotion, as he does of learning.

He never, indeed, says any thing shocking or offensive about devotion, because he never thinks, or talks about it. It suffers nothing from him, but neglect and disregard.

The two testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his books, but that they are both to be had in greek.

Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shews his regard for the holy scriptures, when he tells you, that he has no other books of piety besides them.

It is very well, *Classicus*, that you prefer the bible to all other books of piety: he has no judgment, that is not thus far of your opinion.

But if you will have no other book of piety, besides the bible, because it is the best; how comes it, *Classicus*, that you do not content yourself with one of the best books amongst the Greeks and Romans?

How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after all of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money to restore broken periods, and scraps of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many commentators upon Cicero, Horace, and Homer, and not one upon the gospel? How comes it that your love of Cicero, and Ovid, makes you love to read an author that writes like them; and yet your esteem for the gospel gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such books, as breathe the very spirit of the gospel?

How comes it that you tell your young scholar, he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must be continually reading them all, as the only means of entering into their spirit, and forming his own judgment according to them?

Why then must the bible lie alone in your study? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and taste of the gospel, as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity?

Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of poets and orators? And is not the spirit of

of devotion to be got in the same way, by frequent reading the holy thoughts, and pious strains of devout men?

Is your young poet to search after every line, that may give new wings to his fancy, or direct his imagination? And is it not as reasonable for him, who desires to improve in the divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion, that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul?

Do you advise your orator to translate the best orations, to commit much of them to the memory, to be frequently exercising his talents in this manner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be formed in his mind? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion, and aspiring to God in holy thoughts, may be well formed in his soul?

Now the reason why *Classicus* does not think and judge thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner, than as the repeating a form of words. It never in his life entered into his head, to think of devotion as a state of the heart, as an improveable talent of the mind, as a temper that is to grow and increase like our reason and judgment, and to be formed in us by such a re-

gular diligent use of proper means, as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind.

And it is for want of this, that he has been content all his life with the bare letter of prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the spirit of heathen poets and orators.

And it is much to be lamented, that numbers of scholars are more or less chargeable with this excessive folly; so negligent of improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent, to be able to write an epigram in the turn of Martial, than to live, and think, and pray to God, in the spirit of St. Austin.

And yet, to correct this temper, and fill a man with a quite contrary spirit, there seems to be no more required, than the bare belief of the truth of christianity.

And if you was to ask *Classicus*, or any man of business or learning, whether piety is not the highest perfection of man, or devotion the greatest attainment in the world, they must both be forced to answer in the affirmative, or else give up the truth of the gospel.

For to set any accomplishment against devotion, or to think any thing, or all things in the world, bears any proportion to its excellency; is the same absurdity in a christian, as it would be in a philosopher to prefer a meal's meat, to the greatest improvement in knowledge.

For

For as philosophy professes purely the search and enquiry after knowledge; so christianity supposes, intends, desires, and aims at nothing else, but the raising fallen man to a divine life, to such habits of holiness, such degrees of devotion, as may fit him to enter amongst the holy inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

He that does not believe this of christianity, may be reckoned an infidel; and he that believes thus much, has faith enough to give him a right judgment of the value of things, to support him in a sound mind, and enable him to conquer all the temptations which the world shall lay in his way.

XI. Character of Cæcus.

CÆCUS is a rich man, of good birth, and very fine parts. He is fond of dress, curious in the smallest matters that can add any ornament to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of every thing that he says or does, and never imagines it possible for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of his understanding, as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes every thing in his house, his habit, and his equipage, as

often as any thing more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus* would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.

There is nothing so odious to *Cæcus* as a proud man; and the misfortune is, that in this he is so very quick-sighted, that he discovers in almost every body some strokes of vanity.

On the other hand, he is exceedingly fond of humble and modest persons. Humility, says he, is so amiable a quality, that it forces our esteem wherever we meet with it. There is no possibility of despising the meanest person that has it, or of esteeming the greatest man that wants it.

Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud, than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride.

It is very true, *Cæcus*, you speak sincerely when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no hypocrite, you speak the true sentiments of your mind; but then take this along with you, *Cæcus*, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in other people. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in other people.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS.

The case of *Cæcus*, is a common case; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people; and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, where-ever they find them.

All their speeches in favour of humility, and all their railings against pride, are looked upon as so many true exercises, and effects of their own humble spirit.

Whereas in truth, these are so far from being proper acts, or proofs of humility, that they are great arguments of the want of it.

For the fuller of pride any one is himself, the more impatient will he be at the smallest instances of it in other people. And the less humility any one has in his own mind, the more will he demand, and be delighted with it in other people.



XII. Character of Cognatus.

COGNATUS is a sober, regular clergyman, of good repute in the world, and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners say he is an honest man, and very notable at making a bargain. The farmers listen to him with great attention, when he talks of the properest time of selling corn.

He has been for twenty years a diligent observer of markets, and has raised a considerable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very orthodox, and full of esteem for our English liturgy; and if he has not prayers on wednesdays and fridays, it is because his predecessor had not used the parish to any such custom.

As he cannot serve both his livings himself, so he makes it a matter of conscience to keep a sober curate upon one of them, whom he hires to take care of all the souls in the parish, at as cheap a rate as a sober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very prosperous all his time; but still he has had the uneasiness and vexations, that they have, who are deep in worldly business. Taxes, losses, crosses, bad mortgages, bad tenants, and the hardness of the times, are frequent subjects of his conversation: and a good or a bad season has a great effect upon his spirits.

Cognatus has no other end in growing rich, but that he may leave a considerable fortune to a niece,

whom

whom he has politely educated in expensive finery, by what he has saved out of the tithes of two livings.

The neighbours look upon *Cognatus* as an happy clergyman, because they see him (as they call it) in good circumstances; and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the church, because they see how well it has succeeded with *Cognatus*, whose father was but an ordinary man.

REFLECTIONS.

Now if *Cognatus*, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow rich by the gospel; if he had proposed to himself the example of some primitive father; if he had had the piety of the great St. Austin in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the church; if, instead of twenty years care to lay up treasures upon earth, he had distributed the income of every year in the most christian acts of charity and compassion:

If, instead of tempting his niece to be proud, and providing her with such ornaments, as the apostle forbids, he had cloathed, comforted, and assisted numbers of widows, orphans, and distressed, who were all to appear for him at the last day:

If, instead of the cares and anxieties of bad bonds, troublesome mortgages, and ill-bargains, he had had the constant comfort of knowing, that his treasure was securely laid up, where neither moth corrupteth nor thieves break through and steal; could it with
any

any reason be said, that he had mistaken the spirit and dignity of his order, or lessened any of that happiness, which is to be found in his sacred employments?

If, instead of rejoicing in the happiness of a second living, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman to traffic for gain in holy things, as to open a shop:

If he had thought it better to recommend some honest labour to his niece, than to support her in idleness by the labours of a curate; better that she should want fine cloaths, and a rich husband, than that cures of souls should be farmed about, and brother clergymen not suffered to live by those altars at which they serve. If this had been the spirit of *Cognatus*, could it with any reason be said, that these rules of religion, this strictness of piety, had robbed *Cognatus* of any real happiness? Could it be said, that a life thus governed by the spirit of the gospel, must be dull and melancholy, if compared to that of raising a fortune for a niece?

XIII. Character of *Susurrus*.

SUSURRUS is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities; no one more constant at the service of the church, or whose heart is more affected with it; his charity is so great, that he almost starves himself, to be able to give greater alms to the poor, Yet

Yet *Sufurrus* had a prodigious failing along with these great virtues.

He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him any thing of any body, provided that you did not do it in the stile of an enemy. He never disliked an evil speaker, but when his language was rough and passionate. If you would but whisper any thing gently, tho' it was ever so bad in itself, *Sufurrus* was ready to receive it.

When he visits, you generally hear him relating how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loath to say that which he is forced to say; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed.

Sufurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seemed, both to himself and others, to be exercising a christian charity, at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Sufurrus once whispered to a particular friend in great secrecy, something too bad to be spoke of publicly. He ended with saying, how glad he was, that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, tho' the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply:

You

You say, *Sufurrus*, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind; and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home therefore to your closet, and pray to God for this man, in such a manner, and with such earnestness, as you would pray for yourself on the like occasion.

Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame, who by uncharitable whispers, and secret stories, wound him, like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer then you may, if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend, that you have told me.

Sufurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience, in as lively a manner, as if he had seen the books opened at the day of judgment.

All other arguments might have been resisted; but it was impossible for *Sufurrus* either to reject, or to follow this advice, without being equally self-condemned in the highest degree.

From that time to this, he has constantly used himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely changed by it, that he can now no more privately whisper any thing to the prejudice of another, than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt.

Whisperings and evil-speakings now hurt his ears, like oaths and curses; and he has appointed one day

in the week; to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God, in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

REFLECTIONS.

It may well be wondered, how a man of so much piety as *Sufurrus*, could be so long deceived in himself, as to live in such a state of scandal and evil-speaking, without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the tenderness and seeming compassion with which he heard and related every thing, that deceived both himself and others.

This was a falseness of heart, which was only to be fully discovered, by the true charity of intercession.

And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves as *Sufurrus* did, were often to try their spirit by such an intercession, they would often find themselves to be such as they least of all suspected.

XIV. Character of Ouranius.

OURANIUS is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it, is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all, as he loves himself; because he prays for them all, as often as he prays for himself.

If his whole life is one continued exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfied with any degree
of

of care and watchfulness, it is because he has learned the great value of souls, by so often appearing before God, as an intercessor for them.

He never thinks he can love, or do enough for his flock; because he never considers them in any other view, than as so many persons, that by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his hope, his joy, and his crown of rejoicing.

He goes about his parish, and visits every body in it; but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them; he visits them to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their soul, that he may intercede with God for them, according to their particular necessities.

When *Ouranius* first entered into holy orders, he had a haughtiness in his temper, a great contempt and disregard for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has prayed away this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping, that God will sooner or later hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

The rudeness, ill-nature, or perverse behaviour of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises no other passion in him than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

Thus have his prayers for others, altered and amended the state of his own heart.

It

It would strangely delight you to see with what spirit he converses, with what tenderness he re-proves, with what affection he exhorts, and with what vigour he preaches; and it is all owing to this, because he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to those, for whom he first prays to God.

This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him, instructive, amiable, and affecting.

At his first coming to his little village, it was as disagreeable to him as a prison, and every day seemed too tedious to be endured in so retired a place. He thought his parish was too full of poor and mean people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a gentleman.

This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept much at home, writ notes upon Homer and Plautus, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body, when he was just in the midst of one of Homer's battles.

This was his polite, or I may rather say, poor, ignorant turn of mind, before devotion had got the government of his heart.

But now his days are so far from being tedious, or his parish too great a retirement, that he only wants more time to do that variety of good which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his lit-

the parish is become matter of great comfort to him; because he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there, to make it their way to heaven.

He can now not only converse with, but gladly attend and wait upon, the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the weak and infirm, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people where-ever he can find them; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a gentleman, that he desires to be used as the servant of all; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master girds himself, and is glad to kneel down and wash any of their feet.

He now thinks the poorest creature in his parish good enough, and great enough, to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices he can possibly shew them.

He is so far now from wanting agreeable company, that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world, than to be talking with poor and mean people about the kingdom of heaven.

All these noble thoughts and divine sentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he presents every one so often before God in his prayers, that he never thinks he can esteem, reverence, or serve those enough, for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of holy scripture, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Jam. v. 16.

This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force, and avail much with God.

For this reason he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works may pierce the clouds, and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God himself said unto Abimelech concerning Abraham: *He is a prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live.* Gen.xx.7.

And again, how he said of Job: *And my servant Job shall pray for you; for him I will accept.* Job. xiii. 8.

From these passages *Ouranius* justly concludes, that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life, have an extraordinary power with God; that he grants to other people such pardons, reliefs and blessings, thro' their prayers, as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes *Ouranius* exceedingly studious of christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways,

fearful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God, thro' his own defects in holiness.

This makes him careful of every temper of his heart, give alms of all that he hath, watch, and fast, and mortify, and live according to the strictest rules of temperance, meekness, and humility, that he may be in some degree like an Abraham, or a Job, in his parish, and make such prayers for them, as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects, which a devout intercession hath produced in the life of *Ouranius*.

XV. Character of Paternus.

PATERNUS lived about two hundred years ago; he had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the garden, when the child was ten years old, *Paternus* thus began to him.

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me; and my love and tenderness to you, has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy: your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief, if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you. But

But, my child, tho' you now think yourself mighty happy, because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands, and under the tender care of a much greater father and friend than I am, whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give.

That God whom you have seen me daily worship; whom I daily call upon to bless both you and me, and all mankind; whose wondrous acts are recorded in those scriptures which you constantly read: that God who created the heavens and the earth; who brought a flood upon the old world; who saved Noah in the ark; who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whom Job blessed and praised in the greatest afflictions; who delivered the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians; who was the protector of righteous Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and holy Daniel; who sent so many prophets into the world; who sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind: this God, who has done all these great things, who has created so many millions of men, who lived and died before you was born, with whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life, now live, whom infinite numbers of angels now worship in heaven; this great God who is the creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving father and friend, your good creator and nourisher,

from whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender elm which you there see.

I myself am not half the age of this shady oak, under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it stands, and drops its masters, as it drops its leaves.

You see, my son, this wide and large firmament over our heads, where the sun and moon, and all the stars, appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others as much above you, as the stars that you see here are above the earth. Were you to go up or down, east or west, north or south, you would find the same height without any top, and the same depth without any bottom.

And yet, my child, so great is God, that all these bodies added together are but as a grain of sand in his sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all worlds, and all spirits, as if he had no son but you, or there were no creature for him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the hairs of your head, watches over you sleeping and waking, and has preserved you from a thousand dangers, which neither you nor I know any thing of.

How

How poor my power is, and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late sickness has shewn you how little I could do for you in that state; and the frequent pains in your head are plain proofs, that I have no power to remove them.

I can bring you food and medicines, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment; it is God alone that can do this for you.

Therefore, my child, fear, and worship, and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see him, but every thing you see, are so many marks of his power and presence, and he is nearer to you, than any thing that you can see.

Take him for your lord, and father, and friend, look up unto him as the fountain and cause of all the good that you have received through my hands, and reverence me only as the bearer and minister of God's good things unto you. And he that blessed my father before I was born, will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and therefore you think there is no happiness out of it.

But, my child, you belong to a greater family than mine; you are a younger member of the family of this Almighty Father of all nations, who has created infinite orders of angels, and numberless generations of men, to be fellow-members of one and the same society in heaven.

You

You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in his fear, and to do for you, as the holy fathers, recorded in scripture, did for their children, who are now in rest and peace with God.

I shall in a short time die, and leave you to God, and yourself; and if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to his Son Jesus Christ, and live among patriarchs and prophets, saints and martyrs, where I shall pray for you, and hope for your safe arrival at the same place.

Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them.

Let your thoughts often leave these gardens, these fields and farms, to contemplate on God and heaven, to consider upon angels, and the spirits of good men living in light and glory.

As you have been used to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do any thing, unless you first knew my will; so let it now be a rule of your life, to look up to God in all your actions, to do every thing in his fear, and to abstain from every thing that is not according to his will.

Bear him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence him in every place, for there is no place where he is not.

God

God keepeth a book of life, wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die, this book will be laid open before men and angels, and according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turned away amongst wicked spirits, that are never to see God any more.

Never forget this book, my son, for it is written, it must be opened, you must see it, and you must be tried by it. Strive therefore to fill it with your good deeds, that the hand writing of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all love, and wisdom, and goodness; and every thing that he has made, and every action that he does, is the effect of them all. Therefore you cannot please God, but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom, and goodness. As all wisdom, love, and goodness, proceeds from God; so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness, can lead to God.

When you love that which God loves, you act with him, you join yourself to him; and when you love what he dislikes, then you oppose him, and separate yourself from him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart.

First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of him magnificently, speak of him reverently, magnify his providence, adore his power, frequent his service, and pray unto him frequently and constantly.

Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tenderness and affection, as you love yourself. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful he is to them, how tender he is of them, how carefully he preserves them, and then strive to love the world as God loves it.

God would have all men to be happy; therefore do you will, and desire the same. All men are great instances of divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But above all, my son, mark this, never do any thing through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do any thing in order to excel other people, but in order to please God, and because it is his will, that you should do every thing in the best manner that you can.

For if it is once a pleasure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you, not to see other people so good as yourself.

Banish therefore every thought of self-pride, and self-distinction, and accustom yourself to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions, as your own.

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For as God is as well pleased with their well-doing, as with your's; so you ought to desire, that every thing that is wise, and holy, and good, may be performed in as high a manner by other people, as by yourself.

Let this therefore be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do every thing in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, who desires your perfection, and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more than the necessities of one family require. Therefore, as you are to be charitable to the souls of men, and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth.

As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which is fallen to your share, be employed, as God would have all employed, for the common good of all.

Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily instances of God's goodness towards them; he nourishes and preserves them, that they may repent, and return to him; do you therefore, imitate God, and think no one too bad

bad to receive your relief and kindness, when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you Latin and Greek, not that you should desire to be a great critic, a fine poet, or an eloquent orator; I would not have your heart feel any of these desires, for the desire of these accomplishments is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them are generally vain men. For the desire of any thing that is not a real good, lessens the application of the mind after that which is so.

But I teach you these languages, that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages, and learn the methods of God's providence over the world; that reading the writings of the ancient sages, you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praise of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by their wise sayings.

Let truth and plainness therefore be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to chuse every thing that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God.

Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God, and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true religion is nothing else but simple nature governed
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by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shews of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnished with moderate conveniences. Do not consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires.

Let your dress be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable, that you should be one man, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly.

As to your meat and drink, in them observe the highest rules of christian temperance and sobriety; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul; and only so nourish it, as it may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing, which I shall remember you of as long as I live with you.

Hate and despise all human glory, for it is nothing else but human folly. It is the greatest snare, and the greatest betrayer, that you can possibly admit into your heart.

Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man; it will set your heart and affections right towards
God,

God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men.

Let every day therefore be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakness, and infirmities of your fellow creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindness, forgive their malice, be a servant of servants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind.

Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do every thing in so reasonable and religious a manner, that you may be glad that God is every where present, and sees and observes all your actions. The greatest trial of humility, is an humble behaviour towards your equals in age, estate, and condition of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards these people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no desire to put any of your equals below you, nor an anger at those that would put themselves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad distemper; let them therefore have your tender pity, and perhaps your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will however be the greatest good that you can do to yourself.

Remember that there is but one man in the world, with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself.

The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon be over with you; the world will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it; it seems but the other day since I received these same instructions from my dear father, that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear, and a heart to receive what my father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did *Paternus* educate his son.

XVI. Character of *Claudius*.

IT is true, *Claudius*, you are a man of figure and estate, and are to act the part of such a station in human life; you are not called, as *Elijah* was, to be a prophet, or as *St. Paul*, to be an apostle.

But will you therefore not love yourself? Will you not seek and study your own happiness, because you are not called to preach up the same things to other people?

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You would think it very absurd, for a man not to value his own health, because he was not a physician; or the preservation of his limbs, because he was not a bone setter. Yet it is more absurd for you, *Claudius*, to neglect the improvement of your soul in piety, because you are not an apostle or a bishop.

Consider this text of scripture, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Rom. viii. 13, 14. Do you think that this scripture does not equally relate to all mankind? Can you find any exception here for men of figure and estates? Is it not a spiritual and devout life here made the common condition, on which all men are to become sons of God? Will you leave hours of prayer, and rules of devotion, to particular states of life, when nothing but the same spirit of devotion can save you, or any man, from eternal death?

Consider again this text: *For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* 2 Cor. v. 10. Now if your estate would excuse you from appearing before this judgment seat; if your figure could protect you from receiving according

According to your works, there would be some pretence for your leaving devotion to other people. But if you, who are now thus distinguished, must then appear naked amongst common souls, without any other distinction from others, but such as your virtues or sins give; does it not as much concern you, as any prophet, or apostle, to make the best provision for the best rewards at that great day?

Again, consider this great doctrine of the apostle: *For none of us, that is, of us Christians, liveth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.*

Now are you, *Claudius*, excepted out of the doctrine of this text? Will you, because of your condition, leave it to any particular sort of people, to live and die unto Christ? If so, you must leave it to them, to be redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ. For it is the express doctrine of the text, that for this end Christ died and rose again, that none of us should live to himself. 'Tis not that priests, or apostles, or monks, or hermits, should live no longer to themselves; but that none of us that is, no Christian of what state soever, should live unto himself.

If therefore there be any instances of piety, any rules of devotion, which you can neglect, and yet
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live as truly unto Christ, as if you observed them, this text calls you to no such devotion. But if you forsake such devotion, as you yourself know is expected from some particular sorts of people; such devotion as you know becomes people that live wholly unto Christ, that aspire after great piety; if you neglect such devotion for any worldly consideration, that you may live more to your own temper and taste, more to the fashions and ways of the world, you forsake the terms on which all Christians are to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Observe farther, how the same doctrine is taught by St. Peter; *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.* 1 Pet. i. 15.

If therefore, *Claudius*, you are one of those that are here called, you see what it is that you are called to. It is not to have so much religion as suits with your temper, your business, or your pleasures; it is not to a particular sort of piety, that may be sufficient for gentlemen of figure and estates; but it is, first, to be holy, as he which hath called you is holy; secondly, it is to be thus holy in all manner of conversation; that is, to carry this spirit and degree of holiness into every part and through the whole form of your life.

And the reason the apostle immediately gives, why this spirit of holiness must be the common spirit of
Christians

Christians, as such, is very affecting, and such as equally calls upon all sorts of Christians: *Forasmuch as ye know*, says he, *that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation—but with the precious blood of Christ, &c.*

As if he had said, forasmuch as ye know ye were made capable of this state of holiness, entered into a society with Christ, and made heirs of his glory, not by any human means, but by such a mysterious instance of love, as infinitely exceeds every thing that can be thought of in this world; since God has redeemed you to himself, and your own happiness, at so great a price, how base and shameful must it be, if you do not henceforth devote yourselves wholly to the glory of God, and become holy, as he who hath called you is holy?

If therefore, *Claudius*, you consider your figure and estate; or if, in the words of the text, you consider your gold and silver, and the corruptible things of this life, as any reason why you may live to your own humour and fancy, why you may neglect a life of strict piety and great devotion: if you think any thing in the world can be an excuse for your not imitating the holiness of Christ in the whole course and form of your life, you make yourself as guilty as if you should neglect the holiness of Christianity, for the sake of picking straws.

For the greatness of this new state of life to which we are called in Christ Jesus, to be for ever as the angels of God in heaven, and the greatness of the price by which we are made capable of this state of glory, has turned every thing that is worldly, temporal, and corruptible, into an equal littleness; and made it as great baseness and folly, as great a contempt of the blood of Christ, to neglect any degrees of holiness, because you are a man of some estate and quality, as it would be to neglect it, because you had a fancy to pick straws.

Again; the same apostle saith, *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20.

How poorly therefore, *Claudius*, have you read the scripture? how little do you know of Christianity if can yet talk of your estate and condition, as a pretence for a freer kind of life?

Are you any more your own, than he that has no estate or dignity in the world? Must mean and little people preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost, by watching, fasting, and prayer; but may you indulge yours in idleness, in lusts, and sensuality, because you have so much rent, or such a title of distinction? How poor and ignorant are such thoughts as these!

And

And yet you must either think thus, or else acknowledge, that the holiness of saints, prophets, and apostles, is the holiness that you are to labour after, with all the diligence and care that you can.

And if you leave it to others, to live in such piety and devotion, in such self-denial, humility, and temperance, as may render them able to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit: you must leave it to them also, to have the benefit of the blood of Christ.

Again; the apostle saith, *You know how we exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of you, that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.* 1 Thess. ii. 11.

You perhaps, *Claudius*, have often heard these words, without ever thinking how much they required of you. And yet you cannot consider them, without perceiving to what an eminent state of holiness they call you.

For how can the holiness of a christian life be set before you in higher terms, than when it is represented to you, as walking worthy of God? Can you think of any abatements of virtue, any neglects of devotion, that are well consistent with a life, that is to be made worthy of God? Can you suppose that any man walks in this manner, but he that watches over all his steps, and considers how every thing he does may be done in the spirit of holiness? And yet as high as these expressions carry this holiness, it is

here plainly made the necessary holiness of all Christians. For the apostle does not here exhort his fellow apostles and saints to this holiness, but he commands all Christians to endeavour after it: *We charged*, says he, *every one of you that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.*

Again; St. Peter saith, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it, as of the ability that God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Do you not here, *Claudius*, plainly perceive your high calling? Is he that speaketh to have such regard to his words, that he appears to speak as by the direction of God? Is he that giveth, to take care that he so giveth, that what he disposeth of may appear to be a gift that he hath of God? And is all this to be done, that God may be glorified in all things?

Must it not then be said, Has any man nobility, dignity of state, or figure in the world? Let him so use his nobility, or figure of life, that it may appear he uses these as the gifts of God, for the greater setting forth of his glory. Is there now, *Claudius*, any thing forced, or far-fetched in the conclusion? Is it not the plain sense of the words, that every thing in life is to be made a matter of holiness unto God? If so, then your estate and dignity is so far from

from excusing you from great piety and holiness of life, that it lays you under a greater necessity of living more to the glory of God, because you have more of his gifts that may be made serviceable to it.

For people therefore of figure, or business, or dignity in the world, to leave great piety and eminent devotion to any particular orders of men, or such as they think have little else to do in the world, is to leave the kingdom of God to them.

For it is the very end of Christianity to redeem all orders of men, into one holy society, that rich and poor, high and low, masters and servants, may in one and the same spirit of piety, become a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that are to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light.* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

XVII. Character of Cælia.

CÆLIA is always telling you how provoked she is, what intolerable, shocking things happen to her, what monstrous usage she suffers, and what vexation she meets with every where. She tells you, that her patience is quite wore out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every assembly that she is at sends her home provoked; something

or other has been said or done, that no reasonable, well-bred person ought to bear. Poor people that want her charity, are sent away with hasty answers, not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is too full of some trouble of her own, to attend to the complaints of others. *Celia* has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune; but yet, by the doleful turn of her mind, you would be apt to think, that she had neither food nor lodging. If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a visit, where *Lupus* took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to *Lucinda*, who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirit, that she is forced to send for the doctor to make her able to eat; she tells him, in great anger at providence, that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the disquiet life of *Celia*, who has nothing to torment her but her own spirit.



XVIII. Character of Feliciana.

IF you was to live with *Feliciana* but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but through a littleness of mind and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her cloaths, again to have a new head, and again put patches on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the play-house, and who sings finest at the opera. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily and politely about nothing.

She is to be again delighted with some new fashion; and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards, and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed with imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth night, and again to see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town, again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings,

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress, or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the substantial and regular parts of *Felician's* happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life, but it was owing to some one, or more, of these things.

It is for this happiness, that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and chearful to consider what is right or wrong in regard to eternity; or to listen to the sound of such dull words, as wisdom, piety, and devotion.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness, that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys, which make saints and angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

REFLECTIONS.

Let it here be observed, that as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women that avoid the restraints of religion for a gay life, must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not *Felician's* fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life, for a very small part of her happiness. And

And if you look into the world, and observe the lives of those women, whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God, in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such, as lose all the comforts of religion, without gaining the tenth part of *Felician's* happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people; and rather look and long after, than enjoy those delusions, which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of high birth, and great fortune, having read the gospel, should rather wish to be an under-servant in some pious family, where wisdom, piety, and great devotion, directed all the actions of every day: if she should rather wish this, than to live at the top of *Felician's* happiness; I should think her neither mad, nor melancholy; but that she judged, as rightly of the spirit of the gospel, as if she had rather wished to be poor Lazarus at the gate, than to be the rich man cloathed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day.

XIX. Character of *Flavia*.

FLAVIA and *Miranda* are two maiden sisters, that have each of them two hundred pounds a year. They buried their parents, twenty years ago, and have since that time spent their estate as they pleased.

Flavia has been the wonder of all her friends, for her excellent management, in making so surprising a figure in so moderate a fortune. Several ladies that have twice her fortune, are not able to be always so genteel, and so constant at all places of pleasure and expence. She has every thing that is in the fashion, and is in every place where there is any diversion. *Flavia* is very orthodox, she talks warmly against heretics and schismatics, is generally at church, and often at the sacrament. She once commended a sermon that was against the pride and vanity of dress, and thought it was very just against *Lucinda*, whom she takes to be a great deal finer than she need to be. If any one asks *Flavia* to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right temper, she will toss him half a crown or a crown, and tell him, if he knew what a long millener's bill she had just received, he would think it a great deal for her to give. A quarter of a year after this, she hears a sermon upon the necessity of charity; she thinks the man preaches well, that it

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is a very proper subject, that people want much to be put in mind of it; but she applies nothing to herself, because she remembers that she gave a crown some time ago, when she could so ill spare it. As for poor people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all cheats and liars, and will say any thing to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways.

You would think *Flavia* had the tenderest conscience in the world, if you was to see, how scrupulous and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of giving amiss.

She buys all books of wit and humour, and has made an expensive collection of all our English poets. For she says, one cannot have a true taste of any of them, without being very conversant with them all.

She will sometimes read a book of piety, if it is a short one, if it is much commended for stile and language, and she can tell where to borrow it.

Flavia is very idle, and yet very fond of fine work: this makes her often sit working in bed until noon, and be told many a long story before she is up; so that I need not tell you, that her morning devotions are not always rightly performed.

Flavia would be a miracle of piety, if she was but half so careful of her soul, as she is of her body. The rising of a pimple in her face, the sting of a gnat

gnat, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very rash people, that do not take care of things in time. This makes her so over-careful of her health, that she never thinks she is well enough; and so over indulgent, that she never can be really well. So that it costs her a great deal in sleeping draughts, and waking draughts, in spirits for the head, in drops for the nerves, in cordials for the stomach, and in saffron for her tea.

If you visit *Flavia* on the sunday, you will always meet good company, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the last lampoon, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what plays were acted that week, which is the finest song in the opera, who was intolerable at the last assembly, and what games are most in fashion. *Flavia* thinks they are atheists that play at cards on the sunday, but she will tell you the nicety of all the games, what cards she held, how she played them, and the history of all that happened at play, as soon as she comes from church. If you would know who is rude and ill natured, who is vain and foppish, who lives too high, and who is in debt: if you would know what is the quarrel at a certain house, or who and who are in love: if you would know how late *Belinda* comes home at night, what cloaths she has bought, how she loves compliments, and

and what a long story she told at such a place: if you would know how cross *Lucius* is to his wife, what ill-natured things he says to her, when nobody hears him; if you would know how they hate one another in their hearts, though they appear so kind in public; you must visit *Flavia* on the Sunday. But still she has so great a regard for the holiness of the Sunday, that she has turned a poor old widow out of her house, as a profane wretch, for having been found once mending her cloaths on the Sunday night.

Thus lives *Flavia*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent about fifteen hundred and sixty Sundays after this manner. She will have wore about two hundred different suits of cloaths. Out of this thirty years of her life, fifteen of them will have been disposed of in bed; and of the remaining fifteen, about fourteen of them will have been consumed in eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, conversation, reading, and hearing plays and romances, at operas, assemblies, balls and diversions. For you may reckon all the time she is up, thus spent, except about an hour and half, that is disposed of at church, most Sundays in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of œconomy, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds upon herself, bating only some shillings, crowns or half-crowns, that have gone from her in accidental charities.

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I shall not take upon me to say, that it is impossible for *Flavia* to be saved, but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from scripture to think she is in the way of salvation. For her whole life is in direct opposition to all those tempers and practices, which the gospel has made necessary to salvation.

If you was to hear her say, that she had lived all her life like Anna the prophets, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance, than for her to say, that she had been striving to enter in at the strait gate, or making any one doctrine of the gospel a rule of her life.

She may as well say, that she lived with our Saviour when he was upon earth, as that she has lived in imitation of him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers, as he required of all those that would be his disciples. She may as truly say, that she has every day washed the saints feet, as that she has lived in christian humility and poverty of spirit; and as reasonably think, that she has taught a charity-school, as that she has lived in works of charity. She has as much reason to think, that she has been a centinal in an army, as that she has

has lived in watching, and self-denial. And it may as fairly be said, that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had given all diligence to make her calling and election sure.

XX. Character of *Miranda*.

MIRANDA (the sister of *Flavia*) is a sober reasonable Christian; as soon as she was mistress of her time and fortune, it was her first thought, how she might best fulfil every thing that God required of her in the use of them, and how she might make the best and happiest use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our blessed Lord hath said, that there is but one thing needful; and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing or not doing, for liking or not liking any thing, and that is the will of God. She is not so weak, as to pretend to add, what is called the fine lady, to the true Christian: *Miranda* thinks too well, to be taken with the sound of such silly words; she has renounced the world to follow Christ in the exercise of humility, charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is *Miranda's* fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her mother, she was forced to be genteel, to live in ceremony, to sit up late at nights, to be in the folly of every fashion, and

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always visiting on fundays; to go loaded with a burden of finery to the holy sacrament; to be in every polite conversation, to hear prophaneness at the play-house, and wanton songs and love intrigues at the opera, to dance at public places, that fops and rakes might admire the fineness of her shape, and the beauty of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life, makes her exceeding careful to atone for it, by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself, but she considers all as due to God, and so does every thing in his name, and for his sake. This makes her consider her fortune, as the gift of God, that is to be used, as every thing is that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a christian and holy life. Her fortune therefore is divided betwixt herself, and several other poor people, and she has only her part of relief from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless, vain expences, as to give to other people to spend in the same way. Therefore as she will not give a poor man money to go see a puppet-show, neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner; thinking it very proper to be as wise herself, as she expects a poor man should be. For as it is a folly and a crime in a poor man, says *Miranda*, to waste what is given him, in foolish trifles, whilst he wants meat, drink, and cloaths: so is it less folly, or a less crime in me to spend that money in silly diversions, which might
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be so much better spent in imitation of the divine goodness, in works of kindness and charity towards my fellow creatures, and fellow Christians? If a poor man's own necessities are a reason, why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the poor, the excellency of charity, which is received as done to Christ himself, is a much greater reason, why no one should ever waste any of his money. For if he does so, he does not only do like the poor man, only waste that which he wants himself, but he wastes that which is wanted for the most noble use, and which Christ himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a poor man, and look upon him as a wretch, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread; how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a wanton, idle use of that, which would buy bread and cloaths for the hungry and naked brethren, who are as near and dear to God, as we are, and fellow heirs of the same state of future glory? This is the spirit of *Miranda*, and thus she uses the gifts of God.

Every morning sees her early at her prayers, she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasures of repeating them. She seems to be as a guardian angel, to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers, blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep.

Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private prayers, before the light is suffered to enter into her sister's room. *Miranda* does not know what it is to have a dull half day; the returns of her hours of prayers, and her religious exercises, come too often to let any considerable part of time lie heavy upon her hands.

When you see her at work, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions, she is either doing something that is necessary for herself, or necessary for others, who want to be assisted. There is scarce a poor family in the neighbourhood, but wear something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind, neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly of idle impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observed in the employment of her hands, when there is no useful or charitable work to be done, *Miranda* will work no more. At her table she lives strictly by this rule of holy scripture, *whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion: she eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so regular an abstinence, that every meal is an exercise of self-denial, and she humbles her body, every time that she is forced to feed it. If *Miranda* was to run a race for her life

life, she would submit to a diet that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her, is a race of holiness, purity, and heavenly affection, which she is to finish in a corrupt disordered body of earthly passions, so her every day diet has only this one end, to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of scales, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the soul, to join in psalms and prayers, and lift up eyes and hands towards heaven with greater readiness, so much is *Miranda's* meal. So that *Miranda* will never have her eyes swell with fatness, or pant under a heavy load of flesh, till she has changed her religion.

The holy scriptures, especially of the New Testament, are her daily study; these she reads with a watchful attention, constantly casting an eye upon herself, and trying herself by every doctrine that is there. When she has the New Testament in her hand she supposes herself at the feet of our Saviour and his apostles, and makes every thing that she learns of them, so many laws of her life. She receives their sacred words with as much attention, and reverence, as if she saw their persons, and knew that they were just come from heaven, on purpose to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks, that trying herself every day by the doctrines of scripture, is the only possible way to be ready for her trial at the last day. She is some-

times afraid that she lays out too much money in books, because she cannot forbear buying all practical books, of any note; especially such as enter into the heart of religion, and describe the inward holiness of the christian life. But of all human writings, the lives of pious persons, and eminent saints, are her greatest delight. In these she searches as for hidden treasure, hoping to find some secret of holy living, some uncommon degree of piety, which she may make her own. By this means *Miranda* has her head and heart stored with all the principles of wisdom and holiness, she is so full of the one main business of life, that she finds it difficult to converse upon any other subject; and if you are in her company, when she thinks proper to talk, you must be made wiser and better, whether you will or no.

To relate her charity, would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years; for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. She has set up near twenty poor tradesmen that had failed in their business, and saved as many from failing. She has educated several poor children, that were picked up in the streets, and put them in a way of an honest employment. As soon as any labourer is confined at home with sickness, she sends him, till he recovers, twice the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family, as usual, and the other to provide things convenient for his sickness.

If

If a family seem too large to be supported by the labour of those that can work in it, she pays their rent, and gives them something yearly towards their cloathing. By this means there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year blessing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman, that is more than ordinarily wicked and reprobate, *Miranda* has her eye upon them, she watches their time of need and adversity; and if she can discover that they are in any great streights or afflictions, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a profligate person from being carried to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of *Miranda* more to be admired, than this temper. For this tendernefs of affection towards the most abandoned sinners, is the highest instance of a divine and god-like soul.

Miranda once passed by a house, when the man and his wife were cursing and swearing at one another in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them; this sight so much affected her compassionate mind, that she went the next day, and bought the three children, that they might not be ruined by living with such wicked parents; they now live with *Miranda*, are blessed with her care and prayers, and all the good works which she can

do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in psalms and prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shews a turn of mind so remarkably pious, that *Miranda* intends him for holy orders; that being thus saved himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects, as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their misfortunes and accidents; there are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a cow, or horse, or some little robbery, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for old people, that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance to such people, is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason, they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance, as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace and tranquillity of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda

Miranda never wants compassion, even to common beggars; especially towards those that are old, or sick, or full of sores, that want eyes or limbs. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proofs of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard, or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow creature.

If a poor traveller tells her, that he has neither strength, nor food, nor money left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him, that she cannot relieve him, because he may be a cheat, or she does not know him; but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a stranger, and unknown to her. For it is the most noble part of charity, to be kind and tender to those whom we never saw before and perhaps may never see again in this life. *I was a stranger, and ye took me in*, saith our blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve persons that are unknown to them?

Miranda considers, that Lazarus was a common beggar, that he was the care of Angels, and carried into Abraham's bosom. She considers, that our blessed Saviour and his apostles were kind to beggars; that they spoke comfortably to them, healed their diseases, and restored eyes and limbs to the lame and blind. That Peter said to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, *Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*

Miranda

Miranda, therefore, never treats beggars with disregard and aversion, but she imitates the kindness of our Saviour and his apostles towards them; and though she cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet she relieves them, with that power that she hath; and may say with the Apostle, *Such as I have give I thee in the name of Jesus Christ.*

It may be, said *Miranda*, that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of divine goodness? Does not God make *his sun rise on the evil, and on the good*? Is not this the very goodness, that is recommended to us in scripture, that by imitating of it, we may be *children of our Father which is in heaven, who sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust*? And shall I withhold a little money, or food, from my fellow creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd, as to withhold my charity from a poor brother, because he may perhaps not deserve it? Shall I use a measure towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me?

Besides, where has the scripture made merit the rule or measure of charity? On the contrary, the scripture saith, *If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.*

Now

Now this plainly teaches us, that the merit of persons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindness to those that least of all deserve it. For if I am to love and do good to my worst enemies; if I am to be charitable to them, notwithstanding all their spite and malice, surely merit is no measure of charity. If I am not to withhold my charity from such bad people, and who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people, nor any way my enemies.

You will perhaps say, that by this means I encourage people to be beggars. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against all kinds of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against forgiving our enemies, for it may encourage people to do us hurt. The same may said, even against the goodness of God, that by pouring his blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are encouraged in their wicked ways. The same may be said against cloathing the naked, or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to neglect themselves, and be careless of their health. But when the love of God dwelleth in you; when it has enlarged your heart, and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When

When you are at any time turning away the poor, the old, the sick and helpless traveller, the lame, or the blind, ask yourself this question; Do I sincerely with these poor creatures may be as happy as Lazarus, that was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow heirs with me in eternal glory? Now if you search into your soul, you will find that there is none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for any one heartily to wish a poor creature so great a happiness and yet not have a heart to give him a small alms. For this reason, says *Miranda*, as far as I can, I give to all, because I pray to God to forgive all; and I cannot refuse an alms to those, whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of eternal glory; but am glad to shew some degree of love to such, as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, *it be more blessed to give than to receive*, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms, as so many friends and benefactors, that come to do us a greater good than they can receive, that come to exalt our virtue, to be witnesses of our charity, to be monuments of our love, to be our advocates with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to appear for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS.

This is the spirit; and this is the life of the devout *Miranda*; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds in charity, for that which she allows herself, may fairly be reckoned amongst her alms.

When she dies, she must shine amongst apostles, and saints, and martyrs; she must stand amongst the first servants of God, and be glorious amongst those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy.

XXI. Character of Matilda.

MATILDA is a fine woman, of good breeding, great sense, and much religion. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with any one else, or at any school, for fear they should learn any thing ill. She stays with the dancing-master all the time he is with them, because she will hear every thing that is said to them. She has heard them read the scriptures so often, that they can repeat great part of it without book: and there is scarce a good book of devotion, but you may find it in their closets.

Had *Matilda* lived in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practised in the fulness and plainness of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its

its greatest saints. But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own; so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was meanly dressed in her life; and nothing pleases her in dress, but that which is very rich, and beautiful to the eye.

Her daughters see her great zeal for religion; but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of finery. They see she is not negligent of her devotion; but then they see her more careful to preserve her complexion, and to prevent those changes, which time and age threaten her with.

They are afraid to meet her, if they have missed the church; but then they are more afraid to see her, if they are not laced as strait as they can possibly be.

She often shews them her own picture, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them, how distracted he was with passion at the first sight of her; and that she had never had so fine a complexion, but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it.

Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their dress, that she has some new fancy almost every day; and leaves no ornament untried, from the richest jewel to the poorest flower. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the maid is often forced to dress and undress her daughters three or four times a day, before she can be satisfied with it. The

The children see so plainly the temper of their mother, that they even affect to be more pleased with dress, and to be more fond of every little ornament, than they really are, merely to gain her favour.

They saw their eldest sister once brought to her tears, and her perverseness severely reprimanded, for presuming to say, that she thought it was better to cover the neck, than go so far naked as the modern dress requires.

She flints them in their meals, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many fine shapes she has seen spoiled in her time for want of such care. If a pimple rises in their faces, she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it, as if they had committed some great sin.

Whenever they begin to look sanguine and healthful, she calls in the assistance of the doctor; and if physic, or issues, will keep the complexion from inclining to coarse or ruddy, she thinks them well employed.

By this means they are poor, pale, sickly, infirm creatures, vapoured through want of spirits, crying at the smallest accidents, swooning away at any thing that frights them, and hardly able to bear the weight of their best cloaths.

The eldest daughter lived as long as she could under this discipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age.

When

When her body was opened, it appeared that her ribs had grown into her liver, and that her other entrails were much hurt, by being crushed together with her stays, which her mother had ordered to be twitched so strait, that it often brought tears into her eyes, whilst the maid was dressing her.

Her youngest daughter is run away with a gamester, a man of great beauty, who in dressing and dancing has no superior.

Matilda says, she should die with grief at this accident, but that her conscience tells her, she has contributed nothing to it herself. She appeals to their closets, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion.

REFLECTIONS.

Though I do not intend to say, that no daughters are brought up in a better way than this, for I hope there are many that are; yet thus much I believe may be said, that the much greater part of them are not brought up so well, or accustomed to so much religion, as in the present instance.

Their minds are turned as much to the care of their beauty and dress, and the indulgence of vain desires, as in the present case, without having such rules of devotion to stand against it. So that if solid piety, humility, and a sober sense of themselves, is much wanted in that sex, it is the plain and natural consequence of a vain and corrupt education.

And

And if they are often too ready to receive the first fops, beaux, and fine dancers, for their husbands; it is no wonder they should like that in men, which they have been taught to admire in themselves.

And if they are often seen to lose that little religion they were taught in their youth, it is no more to be wondered at, than to see a little flower choaked and killed amongst rank weeds.

For personal pride, and affectation, a delight in beauty, and fondness for finery, are tempers that must either kill all religion in the soul, or be themselves killed by it; they can no more thrive together, than health and sickness.

XXII. Character of Eusebia.

EUSEBIA is a pious widow, well born, and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one intrusted by God to fit five virgins for the kingdom of heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a religious house, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant, regular devotion.

She, her daughters, and her maids, meet together at all the hours of prayer in the day, and chant psalms, and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works, and innocent diversions, as render them fit to return to their psalms and prayers.

OK

She

She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends.

She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the poor and sick of the parish.

Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as sowing, knitting, spinning, and all other parts of housewifery; not for their amusement, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and be saved from those temptations which attend an idle life.

She tells them she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work, than to have riches to excuse themselves from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more.

If *Eusebia* has lived as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against all instances of pride. And if her virtues are stronger and higher than other peoples, it is because they are all founded in a deep humility.

My children, says she, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends, as having all the cares of a family, and all the management of an estate fallen upon me.

But my own grief was founded upon another principle: I was grieved to see myself deprived of so

faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of christian virtues should be taken from the eyes of his children, before they were of an age to love and follow it.

But as to worldly affairs, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we know ourselves.

If a person in a dream is disturbed with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is awake, and sees that it was the folly of a dream.

Now, when a right knowledge of ourselves enters into our minds, it makes as great a change in all our thoughts and apprehensions, as when we awake from the wanderings of a dream.

We acknowledge a man to be mad or melancholy, who fancies himself to be glass, and so is afraid of stirring, or taking himself to be wax, dare not let the sun shine upon him.

But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for wisdom, politeness, grandeur, happiness, and fine breeding, which shew as great ignorance of ourselves, and might as justly pass for thorough madness, as when a man fancies himself to be glass or ice.

A woman that dares not appear in the world without fine cloaths, that thinks it a happiness to have a face finely coloured, to have a skin delicately fair, that had rather die than be reduced to poverty, and be forced to work for a poor maintenance, is as ig-

norant of herself to the full, as he that fancies himself to be glafs.

For this reason, all my discourse with you, has been to acquaint you with yourselves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions, as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge.

You would think it hard, not to know the family into which you was born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of yourselves, as he that takes himself to be wax.

For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you pure spirits. I do not mean that you have not bodies that want meat and drink, and sleep and cloathing, but that all that deserves to be called you, is nothing else but spirit: A being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as life is contrary to death; that is made in the image of God, to live forever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy life and reason, and knowledge, and happiness in the presence of God, and the society of angels, and glorious spirits, to all eternity.

Every thing that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your cloathing; something that is only to be used for a while, and then to end, and die, and wear away, and to signify no more to you, than the cloathing and bodies of other people.

But,

But, my children, you are not only in this manner spirits, but you are fallen spirits, that began your life in a state of corruption and disorder, full of tempers and passions, that blind and darken the reason of your mind, and incline you to that which is hurtful.

Your bodies are not only poor and perishing like your cloaths, but they are like infected cloaths, and fill you with all diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites, and vain cravings.

So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us, with the one we see, and taste, and admire reason, purity, and holiness; with the other, we incline to pride, and vanity, and sensual delights.

This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the one thing necessary to all the world, it is this; to preserve and perfect all that is rational, holy, and divine in our nature, and to mortify, remove and destroy all that vanity, pride, and sensuality, which springs from the corruption of our state.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world and see what customs, and fashions, and pleasures, and troubles, and projects, and tempers, employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus, as I have told you?

But do not you be affected at these things; the world is in a great dream, and but few people are awake in it.

We fancy that we fall into darkness, when we die; but alas, we are most of us in the dark till then; and the eyes of our souls only then begin to see, when our bodily eyes are closing.

You see then your state, my children; you are to honour, improve, and perfect the spirit that is within you; you are to prepare it for the kingdom of heaven, to nourish it with the love of God, and of virtue, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights, and sensual tempers, which the body tempts it with.

You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings, and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste, and relish, and desire that eternal state, which is to begin when this life ends.

As to your bodies, you are to consider them as poor, perishing things, that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as enemies, that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel; you are to consider them as the place and habitation of your souls, and so keep them pure, and clean, and decent; you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and to give them food, and rest, and raiment, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful and pious life.

Whilst you live thus you live like yourselves; and whenever you have less regard to your souls, or more regard to your bodies, than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons, than upon perfecting of your souls, you are much more beside yourselves, than he that had rather have a laced coat than an healthful body.

For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into weakness and folly; or make you think any thing fine, but a fine mind; any thing happy, but the favour of God; or any thing desirable, but to do all the good you possibly can.

Instead of the vain, immodest entertainment of plays and operas, I have taught you to delight in visiting the sick and poor. What musick, and dancing, and diversions, are to many in the world, that prayers, and devotions, and psalms, are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair, and adorning your persons; but in making cloaths for the naked. You have not waisted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them, for to do more good to other people.

Instead of forced shapes, patched faces, genteel airs, and affected motions. I have taught you to conceal your bodies with modest garments, and let the world have nothing to view of you, but the plainness, and sincerity, and humility of all your behaviour.

You know, my children, the high perfection, and the great rewards of virginity; you know how

it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of high advancements in a divine life: therefore love, and esteem, and honour virginity; bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins, that from the beginning of christianity have, in the several ages of the church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayers.

But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you chuse.

Never therefore consider yourselves as persons that are to be seen, admired, and courted by men; but as poor sinners, that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world, by humility, devotion, and self-denial. Learn to live for your own sake, and the service of God; and let nothing in the world be of any value with you, but that which you can turn into a service to God, and a means of your future happiness.

Consider often, how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with every thing that can promote his glory.

Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds;

for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, and make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things.

Think of the happiness of the prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then think how desirable a thing it is, to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you die you may have your lot amongst them.

Whether married, therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance; and never allow yourselves to be idle, whilst others are in want of any thing that your hands can make for them.

This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves, is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improved by it.

For, next to reading, meditation, and prayer, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some useful, humble employment of ourselves.

Never therefore consider your labour as an amusement, that is to get rid of your time, and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem

deem your time, and make it turn to your account, when the works of all people shall be tried by fire.

When you were little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God and yourselves, as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue, and exalted with the great doctrines of religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise every thing that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ yourselves for the same ends, and with the same spirit, as you watch and pray.

For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how contrary to the wisdom of religion, to make that a mere amusement, which might as easily be made an exercise of the greatest charity?

What would you think of the wisdom of him, that should employ his time in distilling of waters, and making liquors which no body could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when, with less labour and expence, he might satisfy the wants of those who have nothing to drink?

Yet he would be as wisely employed, as those that are amusing themselves with such tedious works as they neither need, nor hardly know how to use when they are finished; when with less labour and

expenſe, they might be doing as much good, as he that is cloathing the naked, or viſiting the ſick.

Be glad therefore to know the wants of the poor-eſt people, and let your hands be employed in making ſuch mean and ordinary things for them, as their neceſſities require. By thus making your labour a gift and ſervice to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy ſervice, and made as acceptable to God, as your devotions.

And as charity is the greateſt of all virtues, as it always was the chief temper of the greateſt ſaints; ſo nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the ſight of God, than this method of adding your labour to it.

The humility alſo of this employment will be as beneficial to you as the charity of it. It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own ſtate and diſtinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different ſpecies. By accuſtoming yourſelves to this labour and ſervice to the poor, as the representatives of Jeſus Chriſt, you will ſoon find your heart ſoftened into the greateſt meekneſs and lowlineſs towards them. You will reverence their eſtate and condition, think it an honour to ſerve them, and never be ſo pleaſed with yourſelf; as when you are moſt humbly employed in their ſervice.

This will make you true diſciples of our meek lord and maſter, who came into the world not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter; and though he was lord of all, and amongſt the creatures of his own making, yet was amongſt them as one that ſerveth.

Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves beneath the lowest of all your fellow creatures.

Live therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others; and let ceremonious visits, and vain acquaintance, have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships, or vain fondnesses for particular persons; but love them most, that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But above all, avoid the conversation of fine bred fops and beaux, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery and compliment of that sort of men; for they are the shame of their own sex, and ought to be the abhorrence of yours.

When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent carriage, be all the state that you take upon you; and let tenderness, compassion, and good nature, be all the fine breeding that you shew in any place.

If evil speaking, scandal, or backbiting, be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself; be as much grieved, as if you was amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can.

Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come, 'till you find a man that has those perfections, which you have been labouring after yourselves; who

is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live, than to want the benefit of his example.

Love poverty, and reverence poor people; as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many friends and advocates with God for you.

Visit and converse with them frequently; you will often find simplicity, innocence, patience, fortitude, and great piety, amongst them; and where they are not so, your good example may amend them.

Rejoice at every opportunity of doing any humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds; whether it be, as the scripture expresses it, in washing the saints feet, that is, in waiting upon, and serving those that are below you; or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill-manners of those that are your equals, or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues; and every thing that is kind and good, naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for, and practise humility, and reject every thing in dress or carriage, or conversation, that has any appearance of pride.

Strive to do every thing that is praise-worthy, but do nothing in order to be praised; nor think of any reward for all your labours of love and virtue, till Christ cometh with all his holy angels.

And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For as

soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections; and is content they should excel in good works, provided that he can but make them proud of them.

Therefore watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought, as you would reject the most wicked imaginations; and think what a loss it would be to you, to have the fruit of all your good works devoured by the vanity of your own minds.

When therefore you have spent days and weeks well, do not suffer your hearts to contemplate any thing as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, who has carried you through such rules of holy living, as you were not able to observe by your own strength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficient in virtue, that can do great matters, but as poor beginners, that want the daily assistance of God to save you from the grossest sins.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility; he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex; and therefore he conjured me with the tenderest expressions, to renounce the fashionable ways of educating daughters in pride and softness; in the care of their beauty and dress; and to bring you all

up in the plainest, simplest instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life.

He taught me an admirable rule of humility, which he practised all the days of his life; which was this; to let no morning pass, without thinking upon some frailty and infirmity of our own, that may put us to confusion, make us blush inwardly, and entertain a mean opinion of ourselves.

Think therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth; and let the double desire of your father, who is gone, and of me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity, to do all the good that you can to all your fellow creatures, until God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters.

REFLECTION.

The spirit of this education speaks so plainly for itself, that, I hope, I need say nothing in its justification. If we could see it in life, as well as read of it in books, the world would soon find the happy effects of it.

THE END.

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A
DISCOURSE

ON

DREAMS AND NIGHT-VISIONS,

WITH

NUMEROUS EXAMPLES ANCIENT AND
MODERN.

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

Those who most attentively consider the phenomena of the
moral and natural world, will be most inclined to admit
the agency of invifible beings.

ADVENTURER.

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M,DCC,XCI.

DISCOURSE

ON THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF THE

NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF THE
MORAL

OF THE

THESE THINGS BEING THE SUBJECT OF THE
PRESENT DISCOURSE, WILL BE THE FIRST OF THE

EDITED BY EDWARD BAKER

THE SECOND PART OF THE
DISCOURSE, WHICH CONTAINS THE
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MORAL

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE phenomenon of dreaming is extremely curious, and has excited the attention both of the Divine and Philosopher in every age. A few thoughts are here thrown together upon the subject, the reasonings confirmed by a variety of examples, and the whole applied to the purposes of morality and religion. The Author is not particularly anxious to establish the authenticity of every instance here adduced. All he has got to observe upon them in this place, is, that some of them are recorded by our best historians; others by those writers who have treated professedly on the subject: while some few have been received from persons now living, whose names he could produce, and whose veracity he hath no reason to call in question. Various will be the opinions of his Readers on the treatise. Some will, probably, peruse it with pleasure, others with indifference, and not a few with disdain. But to every class of his Readers the Author has only to reply—Read with seriousness, judge with candour, and then—valeat quantum vale-re potest.

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A
DISCOURSE, &c.

JOB iv. 12—21.

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish forever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

AT fundry times and in divers manners God hath made himself known unto the world: sometimes by a voice; sometimes by dreams; sometimes by visions; sometimes by Urim and Thummim; sometimes by prophets; sometimes by apostles; but more especially by his Son. All these

methods are spoken of in scripture, and a variety of instances is recorded of each. This that I have just read for the text is a remarkable instance of divine revelation by a dream or vision, and extremely beautiful in its nature, as well as important in the instruction it conveys. Whoever has a taste for fine writing will not fail to admire the very elegant and awful representation.

The late pious and ingenious Mr. Hervey amplifies the whole vision in the following masterly manner:

“ ‘Twas in the dead of night: all nature lay shrouded in darkness. Every creature lay buried in sleep. The most profound silence reigned through the universe. In these solemn moments, Eliphaz alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly subjects:—When lo! an awful being, from the invisible realms, burst into his apartment. *A spirit passed before his face.* Astonishment seized the beholder. His bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head stood erect with horror.—Sudden and unexpected was the appearance of the phantom; not such its departure. *It stood still,* to present itself more fully to his view. It made a solemn pause, to prepare his mind for some momentous message.—After which a voice was heard; a voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting

“ lasting remembrance; for the solemnity of its
 “ delivery, enough to alarm a heart of stone.—It
 “ spoke; and this was the purport of its words:
 “ *Shall man, frail man, be just before the mighty God?*
 “ Shall even the most accomplished of mortals be
 “ pure in the sight of his Maker? *Behold*, and consider it attentively, *he put no such trust in his most*
 “ exalted *servants*, as could bespeak them incapable
 “ of defect. *And his very angels he charged with*
 “ *folly*; as sinking even in the highest perfection of
 “ their holiness, infinitely beneath his transcendent
 “ glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their
 “ obedience, inexpressibly short of the homage due
 “ to his adorable majesty. If angelic natures must
 “ not presume to justify either themselves or their
 “ services, before uncreated purity; how much
 “ more absurd is such a notion, how much more
 “ impious such an attempt *in them that dwell in*
 “ *houses of clay*; whose original is from the dust,
 “ and whose state is all imperfection?”

Such is the nature and purport of this celebrated portion of holy scripture. Whether it contains the relation of a real matter of fact, or only a poetical fiction, I undertake not to determine; nor is it needful to our present purpose that it should be determined either one way or the other. For, however it may be with this, it is very certain there are many other cases recorded in the word of God, which bear no doubtful aspect. And the book, from whence

our text is selected, speaks of it as a thing common, and generally taken for granted, in that day. *When I say, says Job, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.* These, however, seem to imply nothing supernatural; they might be the mere effects of his disorder. But then Elihu tells us in the latter part of the poem, that God oftentimes doth give lectures of instruction in our nocturnal visions: *God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may with-draw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.* This, I think, implies an agency upon the mind above what is natural. Indeed, the doctrine of dreams and night-visions, considered in this light, is well nigh exploded by most of the pretenders to reason and philosophy in the present day; ¹ insomuch that it requires no small share of firmness of mind to avow a belief which is deemed so highly ignominious. ² And, it must be confessed

¹ It may be some consolation to a Christian, who is sober-minded enough to believe, with the bible, and many of our best English writers, in defiance of the sneers of our sceptical philosophers, to know, that Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Cicero, Pliny, and several more of the greatest men of all antiquity, believed the doctrine of dreams and night-visions, as laid down in the following pages.

² It should seem the excellent bishop Bull was of the same opinion, when he delivered the following sentiments, in his dis-

confessed, we cannot be too much upon our guard against illusions of this kind. In ages that are past they have been extremely common, and attended, in some cases, with most unhappy consequences.

But

course on the Office of the Holy Angels. "It is true indeed", says this pious man, "the good angels do not now ordinarily appear in visible forms, or speak by audible voices to men, as in ancient times they did. After God had once spoken unto men by his own Son, manifested in the flesh, and by him fully revealed his will to the world, and confirmed that revelation by a long succession of unquestionable miracles, there was no such need of angelic appearances, for the instruction, confirmation, and consolation of the faithful. The succeeding ages do indeed afford us very credible relations of some such apparitions now and then; but ordinarily, I say, the government of angels over us is now administered in a secret and invisible manner. Hence too, too many have been inclined either flatly to deny, or at least to call in question the truth of the doctrine we are now upon. But they have souls very much immersed in flesh, who can apprehend nothing but what touches and affects their senses; and they that follow this gross and sensual way of procedure, must at last necessarily fall into downright Epicurism, to deny all particular providence of God over the sons of men, and to ascribe all events to those causes that are next to them.

"But, besides, although the ministry of angels be now for the most part invisible, yet to the observant it is not altogether indiscernable.

"We may trace the footsteps of this secret providence over us in many instances, of which I shall note a few. How often may we have observed strong, lasting, and irresistible impulses upon our minds, to do certain things we can scarce for the present tell why or wherefore? the reason and good success of which we afterwards plainly see? So, on the contrary, there are oft times sudden and unexpected accidents, as we call them, cast in our way to divert us from certain enterprizes we are just ready to engage in, the ill consequences whereof we do afterwards, but not till then, apprehend. Again, quantum est in subitis casibus ingenium! How strange many times are our present thoughts and suggestions in sudden and surprising dangers! We then upon the spot resolve and determine

But, at the same time, it will be allowed by all, that we ought not to reason from the abuse of a doctrine to the utter rejection of it; that matters of fact, when once clearly ascertained, can no more be subverted by infidelity now, than in any former age; and that what has been so frequently found true in experience, may, under the same circumstances of human

“ as well, as if we had a long time deliberated, and taken the
 “ best advice and counsel; and we ourselves afterwards wonder
 “ how such thoughts came into our minds. Hither also we may
 “ refer that lucky conspiracy of circumstances, which we some-
 “ times experience in our affairs and business, otherwise of
 “ great difficulty; when we light upon the nick of opportunity;
 “ when the persons whose counsel or assistance we most need
 “ strangely occur, and all things fall out according to our desire,
 “ but beyond our expectation. What strange ominous abod-
 “ ings and fears do many times on a sudden seize upon men of
 “ certain approaching evils, whereof at present there is no
 “ visible appearance! And have we not had some unquestion-
 “ able instances of men not inclined to melancholy, strongly and
 “ unalterably persuaded of the near approach of their death, so
 “ as to be able punctually to tell the very day of it, when they
 “ have been in good health, and neither themselves nor their
 “ friends could discern any present natural cause for such a per-
 “ suasion, and yet the event hath proved, that they were not
 “ mistaken. And although I am no doter on dreams, yet I ve-
 “ rily believe, that some dreams are monitory, above the power
 “ of fancy, and impressed on us by some superior influence.
 “ For of such dreams, we have plain and undeniable instances
 “ in history, both sacred and profane, and in our own age and
 “ observation. Nor shall I so value the laughter of Sceptics,
 “ and the scoffs of the Epicureans, as to be ashamed to profess,
 “ that I myself have had some convincing experiments of such
 “ impressions. Now it is no enthusiasm, but the best account
 “ that can be given of them, to ascribe these things to the mini-
 “ stry of those invisible instruments of God’s providence, that
 “ guide and govern our affairs and concerns, namely, the
 “ angels of God”.

human nature, be expected to arise again. We will therefore endeavour to illustrate the subject by producing a number of instances, wherein God hath indisputably manifested his special providential care and attention, to the concerns of his creatures, by dreams and night-visions; first, from the word of God; secondly, from ancient history; and, thirdly, from well authenticated accounts in these latter ages, and even in the present day. We will then, lastly, make such reflections as naturally arise out of the cases produced, and conclude with an application of the whole to the purposes of morality and religion. The subject itself is curious, and of greater importance than, on the first view, may appear: for, taken in all its consequences, it involves an unanswerable proof for the Being of God, and a particular providence; for the existence of separate spirits, and the immortality of human souls. I readily grant, with all our best writers upon these subjects, that the greatest part of our dreams or night-visions are the mere creatures of imagination,^{*} wild and extravagant

^{*} Mr. Addison considers our common dreams as giving us some idea of the great excellency of a human soul, and some intimation of its independency on matter. The heads of what he observes upon them are as follow: 1. Our dreams are great instances of that activity which is natural to the human soul, and which it is not in the power of sleep to deaden or abate. 2. Dreams are an instance of that agility and perfection, which is natural to the faculties of the mind, when they are disengaged from the body. 3. The passions affect the mind, with greater strength when we are asleep, than when we are awake. 4. What

vagant as the power that brings them forth.²

But

gives us a very high idea of the nature of the soul, in regard to what passes in dreams, is that innumerable multitude and variety of ideas which then arise in her. 5. The next property of the soul, is that wonderful power of producing her own company on these occasions. 6. The last property of the soul, I would mention, is its power of divining in dreams. See Spectator, N^o. 487. where all these heads are enlarged upon.

Dr. Young hath summed up the uses of common dreams in his usual sprightly, yet solemn manner thus:

“ ’Tis past conjecture; all things rise in proof:
 “ While o’er my limbs sleep’s soft dominion spreads,
 “ What tho’ my soul phantastic measures trod
 “ O’er fairy fields; or mourn’d along the gloom
 “ Of pathless woods; or, down the craggy steep
 “ Hurl’d headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool;
 “ Or seal’d the cliff; or danc’d on hollow winds
 “ With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain?
 “ Her ceaseless flight, tho’ devious, speaks her nature
 “ Of subtler essence than the trodden clod;
 “ Active, aerial, tow’ring, unconfin’d,
 “ Unfetter’d with her gross companion’s fall.
 “ Ev’n silent night proclaims my soul immortal:
 “ Ev’n silent night proclaims eternal day.
 “ For human weal heav’n husbands all events:
 “ Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.”

NIGHT 1.

² The phenomenon of dreaming has exercised the wit of man in all ages; and various have been the theories invented to account for it. “ Epicurus fancied, that an infinite number of subtle images, some flowing from bodies, some formed of their own accord, and others made up of different things variously combined, were continually moving up and down in the air about us; and that these images, being of extreme fineness, penetrate our bodies; and, striking upon the mind, give rise to that mode of perception which we call imagination, and to which he refers the origin both of our waking thoughts and of our dreams.

But the question now is, not whether
many of them are foolish and incho-
 rent

“ Aristotle seems to think, that every object of outward sense
 “ makes upon the human soul, or upon some other part of our
 “ frame, a certain impression, which remains for some time af-
 “ ter the object that made it is gone, and which, being after-
 “ wards recognized by the mind in sleep, gives rise to those vi-
 “ sions that then present themselves”.*

Mr. Lock says, “ The dreams of sleeping men are all made up
 “ of the waking man’s ideas, though for the most part oddly put
 “ together.” *Essay on the Understanding*, vol. 1. p. 76. c. 17.

Dr. Hartley explains all the phenomena of the imagination
 by his theory of vibrations and associations. “ Dreams,” says
 he, “ are nothing but the imaginations or reveries of sleeping
 “ men, and they are deducible from three causes, viz. the im-
 “ pressions and ideas lately received, and particularly those of
 “ the preceding day, the state of the body, and particularly of
 “ stomach, and brain, and association.” *Obs. on Man*, vol. 1. c. 5.
 p. 383, &c.

Mr. Baxter, in his *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human
 Soul*, ascribes all our dreaming to separate spirits having access
 to our minds, and furnishing us with ideas while we sleep.

Physicians have frequently accounted for dreams from the state
 of the body. The observations of Hippocrates are curious. I
 will produce a specimen. “ To dream of fire”, says he, “ in-
 “ dicates a redundance of yellow bile; to dream of fogs or
 “ smokes, indicates a predominancy of black bile; to dream of
 “ seeing a fall of rain or snow, or a great quantity of ice, shews
 “ that there is a redundance of phlegm in the body; he who fan-
 “ cies himself among bad smells may be assured, that he har-
 “ bours some putrid matter in his body; to have red things re-
 “ presented before you in sleep, denotes a redundance of blood;
 “ if the patient dreams of seeing the sun, moon, and stars, hurry
 “ on with prodigious swiftness, it indicates an approaching deliri-
 “ um; to dream of a turbid sea, indicates disorders of the belly;
 “ and to dream of seeing the earth overflowed with water, or of
 “ being immersed in a pond or river, indicates a redundance of
 “ watery humours in the body; to dream of seeing the earth
 “ burnt or parched up, is a sign of great heat and dryness; the
 “ appearance of monsters and frightful enemies, indicates de-
 “ liriums in diseases, and to dream often of being thrown down

* See two excellent Papers on Dreaming in the *Mirror*, vol. 2.
 p. 298—319.

rent,³ and rise no higher than the common powers of nature, but whether God *ever* hath permitted, in ages that are past, and whether he *ever doth now*, upon *any* occasion whatever, permit his creatures to have such dreams and night-visions as are supernatural, significant, and admonitory.

Now,

“ from some very high place, threatens an approaching vertigo,
 “ or some other disorder of the head, as an epilepsy, apoplexy,
 “ or the like”.†

Chaucer, in his tale of the Cock and the Fox, gives us a like physical reason for dreams. His words are thus modernized by Dryden.

“ All dreams
 “ Are from repletion and complexion bred,
 “ From rising fumes of indigested food,
 “ And noxious humours that infect the blood.
 “ When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
 “ Of flames, and all the families of red:
 “ Red dragons, and red beasts in sleep we view;
 “ For humours are distinguish’d by their hue.
 “ From hence we dream of war, and warlike things,
 “ And wasps, and hornets with their double stings.
 “ Choler adust congeals our blood with fear;
 “ Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
 “ In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound:
 “ With rheums oppress’d we sink in rivers drown’d:
 “ The dominating humour makes the dream.”

It will easily be observed how utterly inadequate all these ingenious conjectures are to the accounting for most of the dreams and night-visions produced in the present discourse.

³ Mr. Locke, by a fair inference, seems to be of opinion, that some of our dreams are rational and consistent: but whether he was of opinion that any of them are monitory and significant he does not say. See his Essay, b. 2. ch. 1. Sect. 16 and 17.

† See Chamber’s Cyclopædia, by Reeves, art. Dreams.

Now, we may here observe, it has been the opinion of all ranks and denominations of men, in all ages and nations; among Heathens, Jews, Mahometans and Christians, that God doth make known his will upon some occasions in this manner. The holy scriptures always take it for granted, and indeed give us abundance of instances of such manifestations. Neither are other writings, whether ancient or modern, wanting in similar well-attested relations. We will produce a few of each of these kinds.

1. The first we meet with in the bible, is in the 15th. chapter of Genesis, where we are told God appeared unto Abraham, and acquainted him with the captivity and deliverance of his posterity.

2. In the twentieth chapter, we are also informed, that Abimelech, king of Gerar, had a dream, wherein God made known unto him, that Sarah was the wife of Abraham.

3. In the twenty sixth chapter it is said, the Lord appeared unto Isaac by night, and blessed him.

4. In the twenty eighth chapter is recorded a very remarkable mysterious dream, that Jacob had of a ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

5. In the thirty first chapter we find the angel of the Lord spake unto Jacob in a dream, and shewed him the reason of Laban's cattle bearing ring-straked, speckled, and grissled young.

6. In the same chapter it is related, that God spake unto Laban by night in a dream.

7. In

7. In the thirty seventh chapter, we have two prophetic dreams of Joseph; the one about the sheaves making obeisance to his sheaf, and the other about the sun, moon, and eleven stars doing him honour.

8. In the fortieth chapter we have two other significant and prophetic dreams; the one by the chief butler, and the other by the chief baker of Pharaoh.

9. In the next chapter of the same book it is related that king Pharaoh himself had too expressive and prophetic dreams, both which, as well as the two former, Joseph truly interpreted.

10. There is another singular one recorded in the seventh chapter of the book of Judges, about a cake of barley bread, which tumbled into the host of Midian, and which was interpreted to be the sword of Gideon. After this interpretation Gideon was encouraged to attack the enemy, and obtained a complete victory.

11. In the third chapter of 1 Kings it is said, that the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and held a conversation with him. It is a very instructive one, and therefore I will produce it at length: *In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness, and*
in

in uprightness of heart with thee, and thou hast kept for him this great kindness that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king in stead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people, which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. And Solomon awoke, and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord,

M

and

and offered up burnt offerings, and peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

12. The dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, are very remarkable, and involve the history of the world. Those of Daniel too are much of the same kind, and contain a figurative view of the state of mankind to the end of time, and the dissolution of all things.

Several other dreams and night-visions are recorded both in the Old Testament, and in the Apocryphal books, highly worthy the attention of the curious; but as the volume in which they are contained is in every person's hand, and lest I should appear too tedious in multiplying quotations, we will pass on to those in the New Testament.

13. When our Saviour was about to be born there were several notices conveyed to the mind of Joseph, his reputed father, in the same supernatural manner. Yea, in the two first chapters of St. Matthew's gospel there are no less than five admonitory dreams recorded.

14. I do not know if our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness was not of the dream, or vision kind: for, if we read it considerately, we shall see, that there are some circumstances in it, that cannot easily be accounted for on any other principle.

15. The dream of Pilate's wife appears evidently to have been supernatural and admonitory.

16. In

16. In the eighteenth chapter of Acts we have a relation of a vision that St. Paul had, saying, *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.*

17. And again in the twenty seventh chapter there is one similar: *There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.*

These relations are all recorded in the holy scriptures. Several of them have been attended with the most important consequences in the history of mankind: and they are all so interwoven with the sacred story, that they cannot be rejected without shaking the credit of the whole book wherein they are found. But the truth of holy scripture is established upon such an immoveable foundation, that it can never be subverted, but upon principles that would overturn the faith of all history. Before we can commence infidels, therefore, with respect to these parts of the bible, which record the divine interpositions by dreams^{*} and night-visions, we

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must

^{*} Dr. Jortin, than whom there are few more capable of forming a true judgment, observes, that, "setting aside several sorts of divination, as extremely suspicious, there remain predictions by dreams, and by sudden impulses upon persons who were not of the fraternity of impostors; these were allowed to be sometimes preternatural by many of the learned Pagans, and cannot, I think, be disproved, and should not be totally rejected."

Remarks upon Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1. p. 81.

must be prepared to reject the whole system of revelation. For the credit of the former stands or falls with that of the latter.

II. But, secondly, these views of dreams and night-visions are by no means confined to the holy writings. We have several similar ones upon record in the works of some of the most learned of the Heathen. Homer, in particular, expressly tells us, in the beginning of his immortal poem called the *Iliad*, that "dreams descend from Jove." And he gives us a fine example of one in the beginning of the second book. Mr. Pope translates it in the following manner:

- 18 " Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye,
 " Stretch'd in the tents the Grecian leaders lie,
 " Th'immortals slumber'd on their thrones above;
 " All, but the ever-watchful eyes of Jove:
 " To honour Thetis' son he bent his care,
 " And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war:
 " Then bids an empty phantom rise to fight,
 " And thus commands the vision of the night:
 " Fly hence, deluding dream! and light as air,
 " To Agamemnon's ample tent repair.
 " Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattl'd train,
 " Lead all his Grecians to the dusty plain.
 " Declare, ev'n now 'tis given him to destroy
 " The lofty tow'rs of wide extended Troy.
 " For now no more the Gods with fate contend,
 " At Juno's suit the heav'nly factions end.
 " Destruction hangs o'er yon devoted wall,
 " And nodding Ilium waits the impending fall.

Swift

" Swift as the word the vain illusion fled,
 " Descends, and hovers o'er Atrides' head;
 " Cloath'd in the figure of the Pylian sage,
 " Ronown'd for wisdom, and rever'd for age;
 " Around his temples spreads his golden wing,
 " And thus the flatt'ring dream deceives the king.
 " Canst thou, with all a monarch's care oppress,
 " Oh Atreus' son! canst thou indulge thy rest?
 " Ill fits a chief who mighty nations guides,
 " Directs in council, and in war presides,
 " To whom its safety a whole people owes
 " To waste long nights in indolent repose.
 " Monarch, awake! 'tis Jove's command I bear,
 " Thou, and thy glory, claim his heav'nly care.
 " In just array draw forth th' embattl'd train,
 " Lead all thy Grecians to the dusty plain;
 " Ev'n now, O king! 'tis giv'n thee to destroy
 " The lofty tow'rs of wide extended Troy.
 " For now no more the Gods with fate contend,
 " At Juno's suit the heav'nly factions end.
 " Destruction hangs o'er yon devoted wall,
 " And nodding Ilion waits th' impending fall.
 " Awake, but waking this advice approve,
 " And trust the vision that descends from Jove.
 " The phantom said; then vanish'd from his sight,
 " Resolves to air, and mixes with the night."

19. Similar to this, in some respects, is that remarkable vision, which is recorded in the twenty second chapter of the first book of Kings: *And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said,*

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I will

I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.

As Homer's night-vision will probably be considered as no more than a poetical fiction, a few similar instances from the Pagan historians and others may not be unacceptable.

20. The night before the murder of Julius Cesar, as he was in bed with his wife, we are told, all the doors and windows of the chamber where he lay flew open on a sudden. He was startled at the noise, and at the light which broke into the room, and by the moon-shine perceived Calpurnia fast asleep, but heard her utter in a dream some indistinct words and inarticulate groans. She fancied at that time she was weeping over Cesar, and holding him butchered in her arms. When it was day, she begged of Cesar, if it were possible, not to stir out; and, if he slighted her dreams, at least to consult his fate by sacrifices, and other kinds of divination. Nor was he himself without some suspicion and fear: for he never before discovered in Calpurnia any womanish superstition, though he now saw her under such terrible apprehensions.—He went abroad, however, that day, and was stabbed with twenty three wounds in the senate house by some of his most intimate friends.*

21. The

* Roman History.

21. The night vision of Brutus is well known. He being to pass his army from Abydos to the opposite continent, laid himself down one night, as he used to do, in his tent: he was not asleep, but thinking of his affairs, and the event of the war; for he was naturally of a watchful constitution, and no general ever required so little sleep. He thought he heard a noise at the door of his tent; and looking that way, by the light of his lamp, which was almost extinguished, he saw a terrible figure, like that of a man, but of an extraordinary bulk and grim countenance. He was somewhat frightened at first, but seeing it neither did nor spoke any thing to him, but only stood silently by his bedside, he asked it at last, Who it was. The spectre answered him, I am thy evil genius, Brutus, and thou shalt see me at Philippi. Brutus answered very courageously, Well, I will see thee there. And immediately the apparition vanished. When the time was come, he drew up his army near Philippi against Antony and Cesar, and in the first battle got the day, routed the enemy, and plundered Cesar's camp. The night before the second battle, the same spectre appeared to him again, but spoke not a word. He presently understood his death was near, and exposed himself to all the danger of the battle; yet he did not die in the fight; but seeing his men defeated, he got up to the top of a rock, and there presenting his sword to his

naked breast, and being assisted, as they say, by a friend, who helped him to give the thrust, died upon the spot. ⁴

22. The emperor Marcus Antoninus in the first chapter of his Commentaries professeth, that he owed it to the gods that certain remedies were suggested to him in dreams, and among the rest, that against spitting of blood and giddiness of the head; as happened to him at Gaeta.

23. Soranus tells us that Hippocrates, the father of physick and prince of physicians, was divinely admonished in a dream, to go and settle in Thesfaly. ⁵

24. Galen, after Hippocrates, prince of the Greek physicians, chose physick for his profession, being determined thereto by a dream which his father had a little before his death. ⁶

25. Dion Cassius informs us that he was divinely commanded in his sleep to write his history of the Romans. ⁷

26. Pliny writes, that the cures of many diseases, unknown before, had been discovered in dreams. ⁸

27. St. Austin tells us, that one Praestantius desired a solution of a doubt from a philosopher, which he refused to give him. The night following Praestantius being awake saw this philosopher stand
by

⁴ See Roman History and Plutarch's Lives.

⁵ Life of Hippocrates.

⁶ See his Life.

⁷ See his History.

⁸ Natural History.

by and solve the doubt, and presently go away. Praestantius meeting him the next day, asked him, Why, having refused to solve the question the day before, he came to him at midnight, of his own accord and solved it? To which the philosopher replied, I came not in reality, but in my dream I seemed to do this to you. *

28. Before the martyrdom of Polycarp he had a vision; the pillow under his head seemed to him on fire; upon which he said prophetically, that he should be burnt alive; which accordingly came to pass three days after. †

29. When Cicero was forced into exile by an opposite faction, while he abode at a village in the fields of Atinas, in his sleep he thought, that while he wandered through desert places, and unknown countries, he met with C. Marius, in all his consular ornaments, and that he asked him, Wherefore his countenance was so sad? and whither he intended that uncertain journey of his? And when he had told him of his misfortune, he took him by the right-hand, and gave him to the next Licitor, with command to lead him into his monument, inasmuch as there was reserved for him a more happy fortune, and change of his condition. And it came to pass accordingly. For in the temple of Jupiter, erected by Marius, there it was that the senate passed the decree for the return of Cicero from his exile. ‡

30. A

* See Beaumont on Spirits.

† Account of his Martyrdom.

‡ Valerius Maximus.

30. A rich vessel of gold being stolen out of the temple of Hercules, Sophocles was shewed the resemblance and name of the thief in his sleep, which, for the first and second time, he neglected; but, being troubled the third night, he went to the Areopagi, to whom he made known what had passed. They upon no other evidence, summoned the party before them, who, after strict examination, confessed the fact, and made restitution of the vessel.³

31. Cræsus, king of Lydia, had two sons; one of which being dumb, was a perpetual subject of affliction to him; the other, named Atys, distinguished himself by all kinds of good qualities, and was his great consolation and delight. The father dreamed one night, which made a great impression upon his mind, that this beloved son of his was to perish by iron. Upon this, care is taken to remove out of the young prince's way every thing made of iron. No mention is made of armies, wars, or sieges, before him. But one day there was to be an extraordinary hunting match, for the killing of a wild boar, which had committed great ravage in the neighbourhood. All the young lords of the court were to be at this hunting. Atys very earnestly importuned his father, that he would give him leave to be present, at least as a spectator. The king could not refuse him that request, but let him go under the care of a discreet young prince, who had

³ Heywood's Hierarch.

had taken refuge in his court, and was named Adraftus. And this very Adraftus, as he was aiming to fling his javelin at the boar, unfortunately killed Atrys. And so the dream of his father was accomplished, notwithstanding all his precaution.*

32. When Socrates was in prison, Crito went to pay him an early visit, and told him, he was informed by persons come from sea, that the ship from Delos would return that day, the consequence of which was, that Socrates should be put to death on the morrow. Be it so, said Socrates, if it please the gods: yet, I think, the ship will not be here to-day, but to-morrow. Why so, dear friend? said Crito. Because this night, replied Socrates, a woman of a beautiful and majestic form, clothed in a white robe, appeared to me in a dream, and calling me by my name, said, The third day shall land thee safe at fruitful Phthia. They are the words of Achilles in Homer, when he proposed to return home. Socrates took it for a prediction of his death, because he judged, that to die was to go home to his own country. And his dream was accomplished.†

The next is singularly remarkable, and as well authenticated as any thing of the kind is well capable of being. I will give it in the words of Rollin.

33. When Alexander laid siege to Tyre, the Samaritans sent him a considerable body of troops; whereas

† Herodotus.

‡ Plato's Crito.

whereas the Jews thought they could not submit themselves to him, so long as Darius, to whom they had taken an oath of allegiance, should be living.

Alexander, being little used to such an answer, particularly since he had obtained so many victories, and thinking that all things ought to bow to him, resolved, the instant he had conquered Tyre, to march against the Jews, and punish their disobedience as rigorously as he had done that of the Tyrians.

In this imminent danger, Jaddus, the high-priest, who governed under the Persians, seeing himself exposed, with all the inhabitants, to the wrath of the conqueror, had recourse to the protection of the Almighty, and gave orders for the offering up public prayers to implore his assistance, and made sacrifices. The night after, God appeared to him in a dream, and bid him to cause flowers to be scattered up and down the city; to set open all the gates, and go, cloathed in his pontifical robes, with all the priests dressed also in their vestments, and all the rest cloathed in white, and meet Alexander, and not fear any evil from that king, inasmuch as he would protect them. This command was punctually obeyed; and accordingly this august procession, the very day after, marched out of the city to an eminence called Shapha, whence there was a view of all the plain, as well as of the temple and city of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. Here the whole procession waited the arrival of Alexander.

The Syrians and Phenicians who were in his army, were persuaded that the wrath of this prince was so great, that he would certainly punish the high-priest after an exemplary manner, and destroy that city in the same manner as he had done Tyre; and flushed with joy upon that account, they waited in expectation of glutting their eyes with the calamities of a people, to whom they bore a mortal hatred.

As soon as the Jews heard of the king's approach, they set out to meet him with all the pomp before described. Alexander was struck at the sight of the high-priest, in whose mitre and forehead a golden plate was fixed, on which the name of God was written. The moment the king perceived the high-priest, he advanced towards him with an air of the most profound respect; bowed his body, adored the august name above-mentioned, and saluted him who wore it with a religious veneration. Then the Jews, surrounding Alexander, raised their voices to wish him every kind of prosperity. All the spectators were seized with inexpressible surprise; they could scarce believe their eyes; and did not know how to account for a sight, so contrary to their expectation and so vastly improbable.

Parmenio

Parmenio, who could not yet recover from his astonishment, asked the king how it came to pass that he, who was adored by every one, adored the high-priest. I do not, replied Alexander, adore the high-priest, but the God whose minister he is; for whilst I was at Dios in Macedonia (my mind wholly fixed on the great design of the Persian war,) as I was revolving the methods how to conquer Asia, this very man, dressed in the same robes, appeared to me in a dream; exhorted me to banish every fear, bid me cross the Hellespont boldly; and assured me, that God would march at the head of my army, and give me victory over that of the Persians.

Alexander added, that the instant he saw this priest, he knew him, by his habit, his stature, his air, and his face, to be the same person whom he had seen at Dios; that he was firmly persuaded, it was by the command, and under the immediate conduct of heaven, that he had undertaken this war; that he was sure he should overcome Darius hereafter, and destroy the empire of the Persians; and that this was the reason why he adored this God in the person of his priest. Alexander, after having thus answered Parmenio, embraced the high-priest, and all his brethren; then walking in the midst of them, he arrived at Jerusalem, where he offered sacrifices to God, in the temple,

after

after the manner prescribed to him by the high-priest.

34. Two Arcadians of intimate acquaintance lodged at Mægara, one at a friend's house the other at an inn. He that lodged with his friend, saw in his sleep, his companion supplicating his host not to kill him; and heard his voice begging him to come to his assistance. Suddenly awaking, he started from his bed, and was hastily running out of the room; but recollecting his senses, he found he had only been in a dream; he therefore returned to his bed, and composed himself again to sleep. His friend again appeared to him with several wounds in his body, and said, Since you would not prevent my murder, yet I conjure you to revenge it. My host has killed me, and has laid my body at the bottom of a dung cart, and is now carrying it out at the west gate of the city. The man at this suddenly awaked again, and putting on his clothes, ran hastily to the western gate, where he overtook the cart, and, under a heap of dung, found the mangled body of his murdered friend. The innkeeper was seized, and suffered the punishment he so well deserved.

Thus we see that dreams and night-visions have been common in all former ages and among all ancient

¹ Ancient History, vol. 6.

Turner 49. Valer. Max. 1. c. 7. Dr. More Immort. of the soul. 1. 2. c. 16.

ancient people; and, that they have sometimes been very important and instructive is clear, beyond all manner of doubt, to every person who will give credit to history, whether sacred or profane. Hesiod has delivered the doctrine of guardian angels, from whom, possibly, many of our supernatural impressions proceed, in a very distinct manner. And he lived, it is supposed, near a thousand years before our Saviour:

“ Exactly mark, ye rulers of mankind,
 “ The ways of truth, nor be to justice blind;
 “ Consider, all ye do, and all ye say
 “ The holy dæmons to their God convey,
 “ Aerial spirits, by great Jove design’d
 “ To be on earth the guardians of mankind,
 “ Invisible to mortal eyes they go,
 “ And mark our actions, good, or bad, below;
 “ Th’ immortal spies with watchful care preside,
 “ And thrice ten thousand round their charges glide.
 “ They can reward with glory, or with gold,
 “ A pow’r they by divine permission hold.”

How this old Bard should come by these sentiments I cannot conceive, unless he had read the story of Elisha and the Syrians in the second book of Kings, where it is said, *the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*

Be this as it may, Homer, we have seen already, is full of the same sentiments, as well as the Old and New Testament. And our great countryman Milton, in his immortal poem called *Paradise Lost*,

Loft, doubtless had his eye on this part of Hesiod, where he says:

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth

“ Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep”.

And that he was of the same opinion with us concerning dreams, is, I think, pretty evident from his representing Eve, the mother of mankind, while in a state of innocence, as being disturbed with monitory impressions upon her mind, when under the dominion of sleep:

34. “ O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,

“ My glory, my perfection, glad I see

“ Thy face, and morn return'd; for I this night

“ (Such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd,

“ If dream'd, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,

“ Works of day past, or morrow's next design;

“ But of offence and trouble, which my mind

“ Knew never till this irksome night:—

—————“ O how glad I wak'd,

“ To find this but a dream!”¹

He has also given us another beautiful specimen of the pleasing and innocent kind of dream in his *Paradise Regained*, which, he supposes, our blessed Saviour had, when he was in the wilderness tempted of the devil:

35. “ Where will this end? four times ten days I've pass'd

“ Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food

N

“ Nor

¹ See the whole dream, *Paradise Lost*, b. 5. l. 28—93.

" Nor tasted, nor had appetite; that fast
 " To virtue I impute not, or count part
 " Of what I suffer here; if nature need not,
 " Or God support nature without repast
 " Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
 " But now I feel I hunger, which declares
 " Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
 " Can satisfy that need some other way,
 " Though hunger still remain: so it remain
 " Without this body's wasting, I content me,
 " And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
 " Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
 " Me hung'ring more to do my Father's will.
 " It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
 " Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
 " Under the hospitable covert nigh
 " Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
 " And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
 " Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet;
 " Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood
 " And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
 " Food to Elijah bringing ev'n and morn,
 " Though ravenous, taught t'abstain from what they
 " He saw the prophet also how he fled [brought:
 " Into the desert, and how there he slept
 " Under a juniper; then how awak'd,
 " He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
 " And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
 " And eat the second time after repose,
 " The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days;
 " Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
 " Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
 " Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark
 " Left his ground-nest, high tow'ring to descry

" The

“ The morn’s approach, and greet her with his song:
 “ As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
 “ Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream.
 “ Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak’d.”

3. But, thirdly, such things happened in old times, we are ready to say, or else the people were formerly more superstitious and easy of belief; but now it is not so; times are changed; mankind are more enlightened and more liberal, and superstition flies before learning and knowledge as darkness before the rising sun.—All this is in a good degree true; but yet God is just what he was in any former period, and man also is exactly the same as of old, both in his nature, and active powers. Matters of fact also are no more to be set aside by folly and incredulity now, than in ancient times. Besides, scripture being judge, dreams and night-visions were so far from being to cease under the Christian dispensation, that they were to be more generally and abundantly given under the œconomy of the gospel, than they had ever been in former ages. *It shall come to pass afterwards, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions.*¹ These words of the prophet Joel are expressly applied to the gospel times by an authority that cannot be questioned: *Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell*

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at

¹ Joel 2. 28.

at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day: but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.²

Here we may observe the prophecy is expressly applied by St. Peter to the times under the gospel; and no other part of the holy scripture, that I recollect, revokes the grant, either directly or indirectly. I conclude, therefore, as a believer of the bible, that God doth still, upon proper occasions, make known his will to his creatures by dreams and visions of the night. If I believe my bible I must believe this. They stand or fall together.³ I, for my part, never had

² Acts 2. 16—21.

³ “That several divinations by dreams have been made” says the elegant Mr. Addison again, “none can question, who believes the holy writings, or who has but the least degree of historical faith; there being innumerable instances of this nature in several authors, both ancient and modern, sacred and profane. Whether such dark presages, such visions of the night proceed from any latent power in the soul, during this her state of abstraction, or from any communication with the Supreme Being, or from any operation of subordinate spirits, has been a great dispute among the learned. The matter of fact is, I think, incontestible, and has been looked upon as such by the greatest writers, who have been never suspected either of superstition or enthusiasm.”

had any dreams or night visions, which I could fairly consider as supernatural, and which implied the agency of separate spirits upon the imagination: but I have known those who have, and whose veracity I could no more call in question than my own existence. Several likewise we have on record, which have happened in these latter days, that are extremely remarkable, and by no means to be accounted for upon the common principles of nature.* A few of each of these I will now relate, that we may all learn this useful lesson, which we are sometimes apt to forget—God is *the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.*

36. The story of the Duke of Buckingham is well known. I will relate it in the words of Lord Clarendon.

1. There were many stories scattered abroad at that time, says his Lordship, of several prophecies, and predictions of the Duke's untimely and violent death. Amongst the rest there was one, which was upon a better foundation of credit, than usually

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fuch

* The apparition of Mrs. Veal to Mrs. Bargrave, which is frequently printed before Drelincourt's book on Death, is very remarkable, and as strongly attested as any thing of the kind is well capable of being. But this was neither a dream nor a night-vision, and therefore does not properly come within the design of this discourse. We may observe, however, with Dr. Assigny, the translator of that very useful and popular book, that "to reject all narratives of this kind as fictitious, argues as great an error, weakness and prejudice, as to believe all that is reported of apparitions."

such discoursés are founded upon. There was an Officer in the King's wardrobe in Windsor castle, of a good reputation for honesty and discretion, and then about fifty years or more: this man had, in his youth, been bred in a school, in the parish where Sir George Villiers, the father of the Duke, lived; and had been much cherished and obliged, in that season of his age, by the said Sir George, whom afterwards he never saw. About six months before the miserable end of the Duke of Buckingham, about midnight, this man, being in his bed, at Windsor, where his office was, and in a very good health, there appeared to him on the side of his bed a man of a very venerable aspect, who drew the curtains of his bed, and fixing his eyes upon him, asked him if he knew him. The poor man, half dead with fear and apprehension, being asked the second time, whether he remembered him? and having in that time called to his memory the presence of Sir George Villiers, and the very cloaths he used to wear, in which at that time he seemed to be habited, he answered him, that he thought him to be that person. He replied he was in the right; that he was the same, and that he expected a service from him; which was, that he should go from him to his son, the Duke of Buckingham, and tell him, if he did not somewhat to ingratiate himself to the people, or, at least, to abate the extreme malice they had against him, he would be suffered to live but a short time.

time. After this discourse he disappeared; and the poor man, if he had been at all waking, slept very well till morning, when he believed all this to be a dream, and considered it no otherwise.

The next night, or shortly after, the same person appeared to him again in the same place and about the same time of the night, with an aspect a little more severe than before; and asked him, whether he had done as he had required him? and, perceiving he had not, gave him very severe reprehensions; told him, he expected more compliance from him; and that if he did not perform his commands, he should enjoy no peace of mind, but should be always pursued by him: upon which, he promised him to obey him. But the next morning waking out of a good sleep, though he was exceedingly perplexed with the lively representation of all particulars to his memory, he was willing still to persuade himself that he had only dreamed: and considered, that he was a person at such a distance from the Duke, that he knew not how to find any admission to his presence; much less had any hope to be believed in what he should say. So with great trouble and inquietness, he spent some time in thinking what he should do; and in the end resolved to do nothing in the matter.

The same person appeared to him the third time with a terrible countenance, and bitterly reproaching him for not performing what he had promised to do. The poor man had by this time recovered
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the courage to tell him, that in truth he had deferred the execution of his commands, upon considering how difficult a thing it would be for him to get any access to the Duke, having acquaintance with no person about him; and if he could obtain admission to him, he should never be able to persuade him, that he was sent in such a manner; but he should, at best, be thought to be mad, or to be set on and employed, by his own or the malice of other men, to abuse the Duke; and so he should be sure to be undone. The person replied, as he had done before, that he should perform what he required; and therefore he were better to dispatch it; that the access to his son was known to be very easy; and that few men waited long for him; and for the gaining him credit, he would tell him two or three particulars, which he charged him never to mention to any person living, but to the Duke himself; and he should no sooner hear them, but he would believe all the rest he should say: and so repeating his threats he left him.

In the morning, the poor man, more confirmed by the last appearance, made his journey to London; where the court then was. He was very well known to Sir Ralph Freeman, one of the Masters of Requests, who had married a lady that was nearly allied to the Duke, and was himself well received by him. To him this man went; and though he did not acquaint him with all particulars, he said enough to him

him to let him see there was something extraordinary in it; and the knowledge he had of the sobriety, and discretion of the man, made the more impression in him. He desired that, by his means he might be brought to the Duke; to such a place, and in such a manner, as should be thought fit: affirming, that he had much to say to him; and of such a nature, as would require much privacy, and some time and patience. Sir Ralph promised he would speak first with the Duke of him, and then he should understand his pleasure: and accordingly, in the first opportunity, he did inform him of the reputation and honesty of the man, and then what he desired, and of all he knew of the matter.

The Duke, according to his usual openness and condescension, told him, that he was the next day early to hunt with the King; that his horses should attend him at Lambeth bridge, where he would land by five of the clock in the morning; and if the man attended him there at that hour, he would walk, and speak with him, as long as should be necessary. Sir Ralph carried the man with him the next morning, and presented him to the Duke at his landing, who received him courteously; and walked aside in conference near an hour, none but his own servants being at that hour in that place; and they and Sir Ralph at such a distance, that they could not hear a word, though the Duke sometimes spoke, and with great commotion; which Sir Ralph the more easily
observed

observed, and perceived, because he kept his eyes always upon the Duke; having procured the conference, upon somewhat he knew there was of extraordinary. And the man told him in his return over the water, that when he mentioned those particulars which were to gain him credit, the substance whereof he said he durst not impart to him, the Duke changed colour, and he swore he could come to that knowledge only by the devil; for that those particulars were known only to himself, and to one person more, who, he was sure, would never speak of it.

The Duke pursued his purpose of hunting; but was observed to ride all the morning with great pensiveness, and in deep thoughts, without any delight in the exercise he was upon, and before the morning was spent, left the field, and alighted at his mother's lodgings in Whitehall; with whom he was shut up for the space of two or three hours; the noise of their discourse frequently reaching the ears of those who attended in the next rooms: and when the Duke left her, his countenance appeared full of trouble, with a mixture of anger; a countenance that was never before observed in him, in any conversation with her, towards whom he had a profound reverence. And the Countess herself (for though she was married to a private gentleman, Sir Thomas Compton, she had been created Countess of Buckingham, shortly after her son had first assumed that title)

title) was, at the Duke's leaving her, found overwhelmed in tears, and in the highest agony imaginable. Whatever there was of all this, it is a notorious truth, that when the news of the Duke's murder (which happened within a few months after) was brought to his mother, she seemed not in the least degree surprised; but received it as if she had foreseen it; nor did afterwards express such a degree of sorrow, as was expected from such a mother, for the loss of such a son.¹

The two following instances are taken from the little book by Henry Fielding, Esq. entitled, "Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder," and are both more or less to our present purpose.

37. In the reign of king James I. one Ann Waters, having an unlawful and wanton intercourse with a young man in the neighbourhood; and finding her husband some embarrassment to their wicked pleasures, determined to put him out of the way: and accordingly one night, assisted by her paramour, she strangled her husband, and they buried his body under a dunghill in the cowhouse. The man was missing, and his wife made such a lamentation about him, that the people greatly pitied her, and gave her all the assistance in their power in searching for her husband. But as she knew where she had laid him, she

¹ History of the Rebellion, vol. 1. p. 42.

she took care to direct their search, far from the place where her barbarity would have been discovered.

After the search was at an end, and it was imagined the man might be gone away for debt, without acquainting his wife with his intentions; a woman in the neighbourhood dreamt, that a stranger told her, that Ann Waters had strangled her husband, and had hid him under the dunghill. She at first disregarded the dream, but it being repeated several nights, it began publicly to be talked of; and at length they got authority to search the dunghill, where the dead body was found; and other concurring circumstances appearing, the wife was apprehended and convicted of the murder, which before her execution she confessed, and impeached the young fellow her accomplice. He, on her being apprehended, immediately fled, but was pursued and taken, and on his own confession was also executed for the murder. Ann Waters was burnt, and her paramour was hanged in chains.²

38. In the year 1690 a man in Ireland dreamt that he was riding out with a relation of his, who lived at Amesbury in Wiltshire on the Downs near that town; and that his relation was robbed and murdered by two men, whose persons and dress he perfectly remembered. His dream was so strong,
that

² Turner 29. Wanley's Wonders, &c. book 1. ch. 41. Baker's Chron. p. 614.

that he wrote to his cousin at Amesbury, begging him not to ride late, and then related the dream he had had concerning him. The man received the letter, but laughed at the caution: and the next night on the very spot therein mentioned, he was both robbed and murdered. His wife extremely afflicted for his loss, shewed this letter to her friends; and, from the exact description of the murderers, they were taken up, separately confined, and by their equivocal and contradictory answers, some of the murdered man's things being also found upon them, they were convicted, and hanged in chains on the spot where the murder was committed.¹

39. Monsieur Calignan, chancellor of Navarre, was esteemed a man of singular virtue. Being at Berne, one night as he lay asleep, he heard a voice which called him by his name, Calignan! Awakening, and hearing no more of it, he imagined it was only a dream, and fell asleep again. A little after he heard the same voice, calling him in the same manner. This made a greater impression on him than the former; so that being awaked, he called his wife, who was with him, and told her what had happened. They both lay waking for some time expecting to hear it a third time. At length they went to sleep together, when the voice awaked him again, calling him by his name, and advising him to retire immediately out of the town, and to remove
his

¹ Turner, p. 54.

his family, for that the plague would rage horribly in that place within a few days. He followed the direction, and, within a few days after, the plague began in the town, and destroyed a great number of people.²

40. When the celebrated Dr. Harvey, being a young man, went to travel towards Padua, he went to Dover, with several others, and shewed his pass, as the rest did, to the Governour there. The Governour told him, that he must not go, but he must keep him prisoner. The Doctor desired to know for what reason, and what he had done amiss. He said it was his will to have it so. The packet boat hoisted sail in the evening, which was very clear, and the Doctor's companions in it. A terrible storm ensued, and the packet boat, with all the passengers, were cast away. The next day the melancholy news was brought to Dover. The Governour was a total stranger to Dr. Harvey, but by name and face; only the night before, he had a perfect vision, in a dream, of Dr. Harvey, who came to pass over to Calais; and an order to stop him. This the Governour told the Doctor the next day, and the Doctor told the story again to several of his friends in London.³

41. Dr. Donne and his wife lived for some time in London with Sir Robert Drury. Sir Robert, having occasion to go to Paris, took the Doctor, along

² Beaumont on Spirits. ³ Ibid.

along with him, whose wife was left big with child at Sir Robert's house. Two days after their arrival at Paris, Dr. Donne was left alone in the room where Sir Robert and he, and some other friends had dined together. Sir Robert returned in half an hour, and as he had left, so he found the Doctor alone; but in such an ecstasy, and so altered in his looks, as amazed Sir Robert to behold. He enquired the cause; and after some time the Doctor told him he had seen a dreadful vision. I have seen, says he, my dear wife pass twice by me, through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms. A messenger was immediately dispatched to England, to enquire after Mrs. Donne, and it appeared, that she had been brought to bed of a dead child, after a long and dangerous labour, about the very hour that Dr. Donne affirmed he saw her pass by him in his chamber at Paris.*

42. Sir Charles Lee, about the year 1662, had a daughter by his first wife, who was upon the point of being married to Sir William Perkins, but was prevented by death. One night, after she was in bed, she thought she saw a light, and knocked for her maid. She asked why she left a candle burning in her chamber. The maid said she had left none, neither was there any fire. The young lady therefore concluded it was a dream, and composed herself

* Walton's Life of Dr. Donne.

self to sleep again. About two o'clock she was awaked again, and saw the apparition of a little woman, who told her she was her mother, that she was happy, and that by twelve o'clock that day she would be with her. She immediately knocked again for her maid, got up, dressed herself, wrote to her father who was absent, and made all things ready for her departure out of the world. Lady Everard, her aunt, who was in the house with her, thought she was gone off her mind, and sent immediately to Chelmsford for a physician and surgeon. They came, but could discover no traces of a disordered imagination. They let her blood, however, and used such other means as they thought proper: which, when they had done, she desired the chaplain might be called to pray with her. When prayers were ended she took her gittar and psalm book, sat down upon a chair without arms, and played and sung so melodiously, that her music-master, and all who heard her, wondered greatly. When twelve o'clock drew near she arose and sat herself down in a great chair with arms, and presently, fetching a strong breathing or two, she instantly expired. She died at Waltham in Essex, about three miles from Chelmsford.*

43. Major Sydenham and Captain Dyke had frequent disputes together concerning the Being of God and the immortality of the soul. Not being able

* View of the Invisible World.

able to settle their opinions on these subjects they agreed together, that whether ever died first should appear to the other at such a time and place. The Major happened to be called first. The Captain accordingly attended at the time and place appointed; but no Major appeared. About six weeks after, however, the Major came to him when he was in bed, and cried, Cap! Cap! which was the term of familiarity the Major used to call the Captain by when he was living. The Captain replied, What, my Major? To which he returned, I could not come at the time appointed, but I am now come to tell you, that there is a God, and a very just and terrible one; and if you do not turn over a new leaf, you will find it so.—The Captain lived about two years afterwards, was very much affected with the appearance of his friend, and continued to affirm the truth of it to his dying day.

44. Thomas Wotton, Esq. a little before his death, dreamt that the university of Oxford was robbed by five men. He wrote to his son, who was then in Oxford, and told him the particulars of his dream. The university was robbed accordingly, the very night before the letter came to his son's hands. As soon as morning arrived there was a great noise concerning the robbery. Whereupon the young man shewed his letter to the persons con-

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Ibid.

cerned, and all the five men were taken up and found guilty.²

45. William Neffenus, on a certain day after dinner, in a gentle sleep he had, dreamt that he was passing a river in a fisher's boat, as he frequently did for his diversion, and that the boat, striking on the trunk of a tree, was overturned, and he was drowned. This dream he told to Philip Melancthon, who then accidentally came to see him, at the same time deriding the vanity of dreams. But, however, that very evening his dream had its accomplishment.³

46. A certain foldier at Genoa dreamt one night he was devoured by a serpent. A tumult arising in the city soon after, he was killed by the ball of a cannon, which is usually called a Serpent.⁴

47. An ingenious young man, scholar to Alexander of Alexandria, saw in his sleep his mother carried to be buried; whereupon he fell into great sighs and lamentations. Being overheard, he was awaked, and asked the cause of his uneasiness? He answered, His mother was dead, and he saw her carrying to be buried. Alexander observed the day and time the dream or vision happened. A little after a messenger came with the news of the mother's death. And upon enquiry it appeared she died the same day the vision was seen.⁵

48. Johannes

² Life of Sir Henry Wotton.

³ Camerarius's Life of Melancthon.

⁴ Beaumont on Spirits.

⁵ Ibid.

48. Johannes Maria Maurofenus, a senator of Venice, while he was prætor in Dalmatia, saw in his dream one of his brothers, whom he much loved, come to embrace him, and bid him farewell, because he was going to the other world. And having, as he thought, followed him a little way weeping, he awaked all in tears, and was in great fear for his brother at Venice. On the third day letters were brought him from home, acquainting him that his brother died on that night, and about the hour he had had his dream. This he frequently told with tears in his eyes.⁶

49. In the year 1610, Peireskius returning from Montpellier to Nismes with one James Rainer, a citizen of Aix, they slept together at an inn on the road. As Peireskius slept Rainer observed that he muttered something to himself in an unusual manner. He awaked him, and asked him what was the matter? O, said Peireskius, from what a pleasant dream have you roused me? I was dreaming, said he, that I was at Nismes, and that a goldsmith offered me a golden medal of Julius Cesar for four crowns, and I was just paying him his money for it when you disturbed me. They went on to Nismes, and while dinner was preparing Peireskius took a walk into the city; where lighting by chance on a goldsmith's shop, he asked the master of it, whether he had any curiosity to shew him? He told him he had

a Julius Cefar of gold. He asked him the price. He replied, Four crowns. He paid him the money, and his dream was fulfilled in every particular.⁷

50. In the year 1695 one John Stockden, of the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, in London, was robbed and murdered. Soon after which the said Stockden appeared several times to one of his old neighbours named Elizabeth Greenwood in her dreams, and laid open to her the whole business; in consequence of which the murderers were taken, confessed the fact, and were executed. And again after the murderers were taken Mrs. Greenwood dreamt that Stockden came to her in the street, and said, Elizabeth, I thank thee; the God of heaven reward thee for what thou hast done.—This business made a great noise at the time, and is attested by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Dean of York, the Master of the Charterhouse, and Dr. Allix, who had the particulars from Mrs. Greenwood. A fuller account may be seen in Beaumont on Spirits.

51. Marcus Antoninus Flaminius being at Genoa, and somewhat indisposed in his health, borrowed a book of a friend to divert himself. After some days he happened to leave it on a couch with some other books, when it was lost, and could no where be found. In the night following he saw one of the maid

⁷ Gassendus's *Life of Peireskios*.

maid servants of the house in a dream take the book from the couch, and as she was laying it on a table, the book happened to fall upon the ground, and was injured. He saw moreover the maid hiding it in a secret place for fear. Flaminius rising in the morning, and remembring his dream, sought for the book, and found it in the place where he had seen it put by the servant in his dream. He then charged the girl with what was done, and she confessed that every thing was done by her as he had seen in his sleep.⁸

52. Gesner dreamt one night that he was bit by a serpent, and the next morning said he should be seized with a pestilential carbuncle. A few days after a carbuncle appeared in his left breast, and in five days he died.⁹

53. The wife of one of the chief members of the parliament of Provence in France dreamt one night that her husband was executed. When she awoke she found one of her hands so stiff with the fright, that she was not able to bend it; and in it was the image of her husband depicted with his head cut off, all besmeared with blood.—Her husband was beheaded at the city of Paris in the manner she had seen in her dream.¹⁰

54. A certain Physician in America was miserably disturbed with dreams of his being drowned for three nights together. On the third of these nights

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⁸ Beaumont on Spirits.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

his dreams were so troublesome, that he was cast into extreme sweats by struggling under the imaginary waters. With the sweats yet upon him he came down from his chamber, telling the people of the family what it was that had so discomposed him. Soon after there came in two friends, that asked him to go a little way with them in a boat upon the water. He was at first afraid of gratifying them in it, but being very calm weather, he recollected himself, and thought, Why should I mind my dreams, or distrust Divine Providence? He went with them, and before night, by a thunder storm suddenly coming on, they were all three drowned.¹

55. Doctor Pitcairne is said never to have related the following story without some emotion of mind. His friend Mr. Lindsey upon reading with the Doctor, when very young, the known story of the two Platonic philosophers, who promised to one another, that whoever died first, should return a visit to his surviving companion, entered into the same engagement with him. Some years after, the Doctor, at his father's house in Fife, dreamt one morning, that
Lindsey,

¹ Cotton Mather, in his *Ecclesiastical History of New England*, asserts this of his own knowledge.

Grotius also gives us an instance of a very curious monitory dream in the 405th. of his epistles. It may be seen at large in Jortin's *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. I. page 79, and vol. II. p. 117.—Jortin calls it a well attested story.

See likewise in the same entertaining work, vol. I. p. 249, a curious account of the visions and dreams of Price Evans. "They are, at least, a curiosity deserving to be known," as Jortin observes, "but not a foundation to build any thing upon."

Lindsey, who was then at Paris, came to him and told him, that he was not dead, as was commonly reported, but still alive, and lived in a very agreeable place, to which he could not as yet carry him. By the course of the post news came of Lindsey's death, which happened exceeding suddenly, the very morning of the dream.²

56. Colonel Gardiner having made an assignation with a woman of easy virtue to meet her at twelve o'clock on a certain sabbath-day, left the company with whom he past the evening about eleven. Retiring to his room to spend the intermediate hour, he took up a book and began to read. While he was reading, an unusual blaze of light seemed to fall on the book, which he at first imagined might happen by some accident in the candle. But, lifting up his eyes, he apprehended, to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory, while a voice seemed to say, Oh, sinner, did I suffer this for thee, and are these the returns!

From that time he became as eminent a saint, as before he had been a sinner!³

57. Some time ago a Lady dreamt that a frightful figure appeared at the window of her dining room, which was full of company. Upon her enquiring

² View of the Invisible World.

³ Doddridge's Memoirs of his Life.

quiring what it was, they told her it was Death. She begged they would keep him out; but he forced his way in, and pointed his dart at her. She prayed very earnestly that he might be kept from her; upon which he answered her, She might put him from her for nine days, but then he should return to her and take no denial. Immediately after, she was translated into heaven, where she saw a great company all singing, and very happy. But as she knew not the tune, nor the words, she was very melancholy. At length she sat down in a corner by herself, when an angel came to her, and asked her why she looked so melancholy, as nothing but happiness was there? She replied, Because she could not join. He then asked her, how she came there? She answered, she did not know. Upon which he opened a door, and let her down into a most dreadful place, which she found to be hell, where she heard such shrieks and cries of the damned, that she awaked.

This was the dream. And it proved that the Lady died on the very day that Death said he would return.*

58. The late Lord L—n as he lay in bed, was awaked out of his sleep, as he himself described it, by a noise not unlike the fluttering of a bird, about the curtains of his bed. On opening his eyes, he saw the appearance of a woman. He was prodigiously

* Wills's Spiritual Register.

ously shocked, and cried out, What do you want? Why do you disturb me? She answered, I am come to warn you of your dissolution. He replied, What! shall I not live two months? To which she made answer, No, you will die within three days.

His Lordship was greatly agitated in his mind; and told his dream or vision to many of his friends that afternoon in the House of Lords. At length, saturday, which was the third day, came; and though well all the intermediate time, and much in company with his friends, he died a little before twelve that night. All were astonished that hard it; and in spite of the infidelity of the age, every mouth was stopped.*

59. A young man, a tinner in Cornwall, who was very wicked, dreamed one night that he had been long dead; and now heard the trumpet sound to judgment. Fain would he have called to the mountains and rocks to fall on him and hide him from God and the Lamb. While he was thus filled with horror, expecting the sentence, *Depart ye cursed*, to be pronounced upon him; a voice was heard to say, Spare him a little longer. This so overpowered him with joy, that he instantly awoke. The impression was so strong upon his mind for a few days that he made some feeble attempts to reform. But, getting among his drunken, swearing, companions again, he relapsed into his former wicked

* Ibid.

wicked courses, and was cut off in a fever within a month in black despair.*

60. A common hackney coachman, had a most remarkable dream not long since; which is as follows: He dreamt one saturday evening, that he was out with his coach plying for a fare; and being engaged, had directions given him where to drive. As he was carrying his passengers, he thought he was called to ascend an exceeding steep hill; and when he reached the summit, he found the declivity of the hill still more troublesome. However, with great difficulty he got down, and as he proceeded, he arrived at a pair of great iron gates, wide open. When he had passed them, he found himself in an uncommonly dark and gloomy place, in which were vast crowds of people dressed in mourning, all of whom, by their countenances, seemed to be in a very pensive frame of mind. Hereupon he stopped, and asked one of the persons, what place that was? He answered, It was hell. Hell! (said the coachman) I have had more frightful ideas of hell than this appears to be: if this be hell I shall not be under such fearful apprehensions of hell as formerly. Upon this the person informed him, that hell was not so much outward, as it was inward; and, as a proof of this, he opened his waistcoat and shewed him his heart, which was in a flame of fire. This shocked the coachman to a great degree

* Ibid.

degree: but the person proceeded to inform him, that his case was not singularly shocking; for all whom he then saw were in the same condition; (and added) if he would accompany him, he should see worse than that. Here the coachman refused; and in great confusion and consternation attempted to return; but, to his surprise, the person, in conjunction with others, caught hold of him, and refused to let him go, except he would promise to come again. After he had used every effort to free himself to no effect, he at last promised, if they would let him go, he would certainly come again at twelve o'clock. Upon this condition they let him depart, and he drove off in haste. When he was got out, he awoke in great horror of mind. He then awoke his wife, and related the whole to her; but she treated it with ridicule, and soon went to sleep again. But the poor man slept no more; and in the morning said, he was afraid he should die and go to hell; and desired his wife to seek for some man to go out with the coach that day, for he could not; and refused to eat or drink any thing. Hereupon his wife took fire, and used him with rough language; and went among her acquaintance, ridiculing his fancy, and said her husband was going to hell at twelve o'clock. This passed on, and the man got worse in his mind, till the clock struck twelve; when his wife damned him, and said, It is twelve o'clock, and you are not yet gone to hell. With
that

that, he replied, Hold your tongue, for I am going; and immediately fell down dead. This the person related to the minister, the Rev. Mr. W. who communicated it to me as certain, and subjoined, that the wife was then almost in a state of distraction.*

The foregoing relations have all been recorded in one publication or another, and most of them several times over. These that follow, I believe, are entirely new, and never yet have made their way into any collection of this kind. They have all, excepting that concerning myself, been related to me by persons upon whose veracity I have every reason to depend. Indeed I have most of them before me in the hand writing of the several persons to whom they relate, and could produce all their names at length, were it expedient so to do.

61. Jane Cotterel of L—— was afflicted with a cancer in her mouth for several years, and was brought very low both in body, mind, and circumstances. Being in an agony of pain one day, while the surgeon was dressing the sore, she cried out in great earnestness—"My good God, look down upon me in mercy, for Christ's sake." The surgeon, being angry, immediately left off dressing the wound, bid her go to the God she called upon, and see if he would help her, for he himself would have nothing more to say to her. The poor afflicted woman was greatly shocked at his behaviour

* Ibid.

behaviour, and begged to know what he demanded for his attendance. His demand was exorbitant, and reduced her and her family almost to want. However, at last she paid all he required, and returned home with a light purse and a heavy heart.

Some little time after this the poor woman dreamt three or four nights together, that she saw a man who made a perfect cure of her cancerous complaint. Upon this she greatly importuned her husband to take her to the place where she saw the man. He, thinking it was nothing but a dream, in consequence of her suffering, begged her not to think of going again from home, so ill as she was. Persisting, however, in the thought of going to the place where she saw the man, her husband at last consented. She went, and had not been long at the place before she saw the very person walk into the room that she had seen in her sleep. She immediately started up, thanked God, and running to the man, said, she was rejoiced to see him. The man surprised (having never seen the woman before) asked what she meant? O Sir, said she, you are the person who are to cure my cancer. Good woman, says he, I never cured a cancer in my life. At this reply the poor woman was cast down, and cried out, Then all is over. The man, seeing the woman in such distress, and a deplorable object to look upon, asked the cause of her applying to him.

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She told him all the particulars before related; and added, If you can help me, do. He then bid her be comforted; for he knew of something which had been of use, if she would try it. Any thing Sir, you advise I will most certainly try, said she. He accordingly made her up an application, which she used. And, in a little time, she was quite cured of the cancer, and restored to perfect health. This happened upwards of fifteen years ago. I could mention the surgeon's name who treated her with such inhumanity, if it were expedient. He was a noted deist.

62. Some years ago the Lady of colonel Gale, having lost her husband, was going to Kingston in Jamaica, to administer to his effects. In her way she stopped all night at a friend's house, intending to proceed on her journey the next morning. She accordingly ordered her coachman to be ready to set out at the appointed hour. Mrs. Gale's waiting woman, who accompanied her mistress, dreamt that night, that her master appeared to her, and enquired where her mistress was. The servant told him, that her Lady was going to Kingston, and was now on her journey. The Colonel replied, She must not go, she must return with him, for he was come to fetch her. This the servant told next morning to the family where they were. Soon after this she went into her Lady's room to call her up; but was told by her, that she found herself somewhat

somewhat indisposed, and did not think she should be well enough to proceed on her journey that day. She moreover desired the servant to forbid the carriage being got ready, according to the order given the coachman the night before. When the Lady of the house perceived her friend very feverish and indisposed, the Doctor was called in, but all to no purpose: for the fever increased upon her to such a degree, that she survived little more than a week or ten days.

63. A child, about nine or ten years of age, was sent to Mr. P— a Bank-director from Portugal for its education. A servant woman usually staid by the child till she went to sleep. One night the child waked screaming, My papa is drowned; my papa is drowned! The servant tried to pacify her in vain, and called Mrs. P— into the chamber to the child. But all that could be said or done was to no effect; for the child continued screaming, My papa is drowned!— I saw the boat turn over, and my papa in it!

All the family, both gentlemen and ladies, thought the circumstance so extraordinary, that they made a memorandum of it, and the time it happened, in writing; and the event proved, that the child's father was drowned at that very time. For he with several other gentlemen had dined on board an East India vessel, and staid late in the evening; but having some urgent business to attend early next morning

morning, he hailed a fishing boat to carry him on shore; which boat was overfet, and he was drowned.

64. W—A— sent his eldest son to the East Indies in the rank of a midshipman. When the ship had sailed from London about five months, Mr. A. dreamt that he saw his son thrown over the side of the vessel, and the ship pass over him. He awoke much agitated, and told his wife the dream. She used every argument to invalidate the force of such a chimerical vision, but to no purpose; for he continued strongly prepossessed with a belief that his son was actually dead. The event was, that the young man had died of a fever, and was interred in the waves of the sea, sewed up in a sheet, that very night his father dreamt he saw him thrown over the side of the vessel.

65. Mr. W—t had a brother that married without the approbation of his relations, who are of large property. They were so disobligh'd with his conduct, that they brake off all intercourse with him. The young man's family soon grew numerous, and their subsistence scant. In this situation he wrote to his oldest brother, and supplicated relief. But Mr. W— was inexorable to his entreaties. One night after this, he dreamt that his brother came to him, and looked thin and shabby, but did not speak. The same thing happened a second, and third time, only with this difference, that the last time the young man had his night cap on, and reproached him

him for his cruelty and neglect, adding, It was now too late, and so left him. This last dream affected Mr. W—t's feelings greatly, and he awaked in vast horror of mind. He instantly rung his bell, and ordered his servant to put the horses to his post carriage without delay. He set out to visit his brother, who lived in a very retired country place. He was met at the door of his brother's poor habitation by one of his children, that conducted him to his brother's room, who lay stretched on a bed in the agonies of death, having on the dirty night cap, and the very dress in which he dreamt he saw him. He died that same day, and his death so deeply affected Mr. W——t that he never recovered his spirits afterwards, though he provided amply for the widow and children.

66. About the year 1774 a considerable number of families went out of Yorkshire to settle in Nova Scotia. Among others was one man, whose name was Brian Kay, that lived near Northallerton. He was possessed of a small property, and a family of several children, some of whom were growing up to be young men and women. The eldest of the daughters had been upon a very intimate footing with a person of the same age, named Polly Smith, who was a near neighbour. When these two girls parted, great was their mutual distress. She that went to Nova Scotia particularly requested from her friend, to let her know how matters stood in England.

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land; at the same time assuring her, whatever happened to her in Nova Scotia, she would let her know, either one way or another. These were her last words to Polly Smith. Accordingly, Kay and his family set sail from Liverpool. And, some weeks after they were gone, this same Polly Smith had a most afflictive dream or vision concerning her absent friend. It was on the 2d. of June 1774, about one o'clock in the morning. She thought the room where she lay was full of light, and she saw Betty Kay, her friend, standing by the bedside, all in white, with her face looking as though she was dead. O Betty, said she, what is the matter thou lookest so ill? What, is not Nova Scotia as good as old England? Betty answered, No, no; but it is a good while since I left Nova Scotia. Polly asked her where her father and mother, and all the rest of the children were? She said, They were then in Nova Scotia. Polly asked her what they built their houses on? She said, Most of them on wood. Polly asked her various other questions, all which she answered, and then shewed her a letter about the size of a Reading-made-easy, which had two seals on it. Betty then said, Your father will receive such a letter as this from my father, which will tell you all. Polly then became quite awake, and Betty lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and sunk down with three dreadful groans, and disappeared. Immediately the room was all dark.

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This dream or vision made a prodigious impression upon the mind of the young woman. She told it next morning to her father and mother, and other friends, with many tears. They did all that in them lay to convince her it was but a dream, and ought not to be regarded; but all to no purpose. Her health was greatly affected by the anxiety of her mind, and she continually affirmed, that her friend was dead, and did not doubt but such a letter would arrive as Betty had let her see. From this time, which was in June, as we have observed above, she kept anxiously looking for the letter in question, till near Martinmas, when Polly's father received a letter from the said Brian Kay, exactly of the size and shape of that which Polly had seen in her sleep, sealed with two seals, and giving a full account of the death of both his eldest daughters, and all the misfortunes which had befallen them to that time, just as had been represented in the night vision.

67. J—R— had a son, an officer in a distinguished line, who was with his regiment in the East Indies, and about whose safety she was perfectly at rest, having had recent accounts of his health, and of the country's being in peace. She went to bed one night, at her usual hour, and soon after, falling asleep, she dreamt she was in a strange place, and heard a buzzing sound of human voices at a distance. She looked towards the place from whence the noise came, and saw the approach of

many men, and some soldiers, carrying a vessel like a long basket or cradle. In this cradle was her son, laid at his length, looking deadly pale, dressed in a light brown furtoot coat, and one lap thrown carelessly over his middle. She was struck with such horror, that she awaked in great agonies, and slept no more that night. The next morning she told her dream to the lady with whom she was at breakfast. The servant who attended them had been a soldier in the early part of his life, and was so struck with the circumstance, that he, of his own accord, wrote down the occurrence; as did also some other ladies who breakfasted with them. The event proved, that the young gentleman was killed by a ball at that very instant, and carried to the General's tent in a sort of cradle, just as his mother saw it in her dream.

It is remarkable, that the young officer being engaged in directing a battery at the time of his fate, the General¹ called to him, and desired him to change his regimental coat, as it was of too glaring a colour, and would make him a conspicuous mark for the enemy's cannon. This was done a short time before he fell. And this was the very identical coat, as it afterwards appeared, which his mother saw in her sleep.

68. Mr. R—— was abroad, and his wife in England. One night she dreamt that her wedding
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¹The present General Smith.

ring broke into many pieces, and fell from her finger. She fancied that she tried to collect the bits, and put them together again, but could not effect her purpose; which gave her so much pain, that she screamed out in her sleep so vehemently as to awake her maid servant, who slept in an adjoining room. The servant went instantly to her mistress's chamber, and found her weeping, just awaked from her dream. She told the dream to her maid, and also to her niece, and in a short time afterwards she received an account of her husband's death. On examining the memorandum made of the time of her dream, it appeared he had died about 11 o'clock that day.

69. A certain lady was married to a gentleman, whose circumstances were involved, and in a short time afterwards he was obliged to leave his family and go abroad to repair his shattered fortune. He left his wife in the care of a gentleman, whom he thought his friend, but in that was mistaken. The lady was young, well accomplished, and very beautiful. Her guardian proved a villain, and tried every art to gain the lady's affections. But finding all his wiles made no impression upon her, he had recourse to stratagem. The plan was so deeply couched, that the lady's innocence would, most probably, have been a victim to his vile pursuit, had not a dream alarmed and determined her to avoid the danger.

She dreamt she was going to a strange house, close to which appeared a thicket, in the form of a labyrinth. This labyrinth she entered, and followed its windings till they terminated in a small open space, in which there stood a horse, pasturing. The moment the horse saw her, it reared up and plunged, and then ran full speed towards her, with its mouth open, and its two fore feet lifted up, as meant to trample her down. She was dreadfully affrighted, and looked round to make her escape, but found no passage for retreat. However, being determined, if possible, to avoid the furious animal, which threatened her destruction, she ran into the hedge, which was full of quick thorns and briers. Just as she entered the hedge, a great black man, like a monstrous negro, burst from the hedge, and engaged the horse for some time, and at last slew him. When the horse fell dead to the ground, the black man called to her, and bid her come and view him. She trembled every limb, more afraid, if possible, of the man, than she was before of the horse. She durst not, however, disobey him, but went tremblingly forward. When she came to the place where the horse lay and the man stood, Look here, said he, and see who lies before you in the disguise of a horse. He ripped open the horse's skin, and shewed her the gentleman whom her husband had entrusted her to the care of, and then said, Look at me. She did so, and saw an angel, who
instantly

instantly disappeared. Her fright awaked her, and made so deep an impression upon her mind, that she wrote to the gentleman the next day, and related to him her dream. This so shocked him, that he ever after desisted from his hidden wicked purpose. He confessed to her his horrid designs, begged her forgiveness, and became a great penitent. The dream, notwithstanding, was literally fulfilled in part; for this gentleman's affairs fell into disorder, and he was obliged to assume a disguise seven years after, and go into a part of the kingdom, where he was not known, to avoid a prosecution for debt. He took a fictitious name, and died in that state, without any one around him knowing who he really was, till his family took his corps away. Marvelous as this story appears, it is nevertheless strictly true.

70. Mrs. R— some years ago dreamt she saw her youngest child, who was then an infant about nine months old, stretched a corps, with rags upon its eyes, and placed on a broad landing in the stair-case. She waked in a sad fright, and was so rejoiced to find it a dream, that she put on her night gown and slippers, and run up to the nursery, where the babe was laid in the arms of his wet nurse. She took up the child, kissed him and wept over him bitterly, from the dream's having made such an impression upon her spirits. The child's nurse was much surprized and enquired the cause. I thought I saw him dead; replied the mother, and you weeping at his feet. In

In seven months after, when the dream was forgot, till all the occurrences took place exactly as they had been dreamt, the child died. The corps was stretched upon a twilight table in a dressing room. The child's godmother, entering the room, found it very close and hot, and the child's eyes a little open. She therefore took two halfpennies and wrapped them in bits of fine linen, and laid them on the child's eyes to close them up. Which done, she removed the corps to the landing of the stairs, and went down. The nurse, who was up another pair of stairs, was sent to fetch something, and found the corps removed, and stood weeping over it. When the child's mother descended the stairs, and saw them both just as she had dreamt seven months before, she was so struck, that she sunk down upon the stairs. The nurse cried out, I know, madam, what you are thinking of. Pray, Ellin, said the mother, what is it? Your dream, replied the nurse. The mother never was so affected as when she found the corps in the stair-case. But neither she nor the nurse knew at that time by whose means the child was placed there.

71. While the above child was buried Mrs. R— sent another of her sons, about five years and four months old, to the house of a friend in the country, to be out of the way of the funeral, while every precaution was used to prevent his knowing that his brother was dead. On his return home, and seeing the
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the nurse without his little brother, he enquired for him. She and the servants told him, his brother was gone to the house of a relation in the country, whom he well knew. But how could you let him go, nurse, said the child, without you? The nurse replied, He must not suck any longer, he is now got well again. Is he? said the child, and asked no more questions concerning him. In the course of a few days after, the child came to the chamber door of his father and mother very early in the morning; and, knocking hard, with great impatience desired to be let into the room. His father called out to bid him go back to the nursery. No, said the child, I will come in. Upon this the door was opened, and in he went, with no other covering but his shirt. Surprised to see the child in that situation, they called him to go to bed to them. This he refused to do, but addressed himself to his father with great earnestness, saying, No, papa, I will not come to you, nor to my mamma neither; no, never! for you have put my brother Billy in a box, and put him in the pit-hole; you have; and you will put me there by and bye; you will. All this time he wept bitterly. His parents fetched him to them, and tried every method to divert the child from this idea, and to compose his mind. When he was pacified they enquired who had told him such stories? This question set him a weeping afresh. He replied, however, that it was his brother

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ther Billy had told him so himself. How could your brother tell you so? said his father: you know he cannot talk. Yes, Papa, said the child, but he can, and walk too; for he came into my room, and said, Brother Tommy, papa and mamma have put me in a box into the pit-hole, and they will put you there by and bye. Why, Tom, you talk nonsense, said his father; and then offered him a bribe to inform him who had told him such stuff. But the child kept to his story, and added that his brother Billy was grown very tall, and could walk as well as any person, and talk too, and wore a white dress with a train to it.

When his parents went down stairs they strictly interrogated the servants whether they had any of them told the child of his brother's death: but they all made the most solemn declarations, that they had never heard him mention his brother, but the first time when he questioned the nurse, nor had any thing ever been said to him on the subject. He lived just seventeen months after his brother, and then took a sudden illness, and died in the space of two days.

72. Mr. A— was a man of brilliant talents, lively wit, and that sort of accommodating turn, which procured him the attention of people in the most distinguished ranks of life. His temper was extremely volatile, and led him into some gay and fashionable vices; while, in other respects, he had
great

great merit, being a good husband, a good father, and a very domestic man. His mind had been injured by reading deistical authors, and living in the society of certain persons who professed those tenets. While this was his situation, a sudden turn of fortune took place in his affairs, and he was reduced from a state of ease and affluence to a state of all but indigence. His mind was badly suited to meet such a shock. He tried to conceal it from his family and friends, hoping by certain experiments in business to retrieve his affairs. All his attempts, however, proved abortive, and only contributed to hasten so much the faster the entire ruin of his family. Sometime before this reverse of fortune took place, his eldest daughter went into France with a party of ladies for education. About the time of Easter, a French pedlar called upon the ladies with his merchandise, consisting of a great variety of curious prints and painted pictures. They all became purchasers, and determined to send a chosen set of the prints, as a present to Mr. A— his wife, and daughters, by the first mail to England. The parcel that contained the pictures arrived at the house of Mr. A— in London about three o'clock in the afternoon; and by the footman was placed, with other letters, in Mr. A's closet. Mr. A— being gone to the Queen's palace did not return home to dinner till half past four o'clock. As soon as he entered the dining room Mrs. A—
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told her husband of the letters. He ordered them to be brought to him. And on perceiving one of them very large he opened it: which he had no sooner done, but he cried out, sunk down in his chair, and fainted away. When he recovered, he faintly said to his wife, Do you remember what I said to you this morning when you awaked me? Yes, very well. Pray what was it? You appeared greatly agitated in your sleep, I feared you were ill, and awaked you. But what did I say to you at that time? You told me, that I had disturbed you in a very interesting moment, for that you were dreaming the sky opened, and a hand appeared holding a small figure representing our Saviour upon a cross. Mr. A— then took the picture, painted upon vellum, that had first presented itself to him in the parcel, and shewed it to his wife and daughters. The young ladies immediately said, Papa, that is exactly like what you told us you dreamt you saw when mamma waked you this morning.

This occurrence Mr. A— endeavoured to shake off his mind, but to no purpose. The conviction of a separate existence pursued him into every place. All his deistical reasonings failed him. His mind became perplexed, his circumstances more so. His gay friends forsook him. The world reproached him. His mind was in darkness and horror. He wished for death, but durst not look that way. Thus he lived in perpetual conflicts between Christianity

Christianity and Infidelity, with much despair, and but little hope. At length he left his family, retired into a small country village, where, like a hermit, he spent his time in penitence and prayer. In about a year he died, at a distance from all his friends, meek, humble, and resigned, a thorough convert from deism to Christianity. Such was the issue of his dream!

73. The Lady of Sir Watkin William Wynne some years ago dreamed two or three times in one night, that her husband was killed by a fall from his horse in hunting; and on his awaking in the morning, and ordering the huntsman to get the hounds ready, for that he intended to hunt that day; his lady entreated him not to go. He desired to know her reason for objecting to his going then, as she had never done so before. She was unwilling to tell him her dream, fearing she should be laughed at by him. But on his urging it, she told him what she had dreamt. He, as she supposed, laughed heartily at her, saying, He would certainly go now, in order to let her see there was nothing in dreams. He went—was thrown from his horse—and killed—just as had been represented to his lady in her dream.

74. I said above, that I myself was a stranger to such dreams or visions of the night, as could justly be considered supernatural. I will take the liberty here, however, of relating a circumstance of a similar kind, which happened to me many years ago. When I was yet a boy, and undesigned for the ministry

ministry, either by my Parents, or from inclination, one Sunday evening, while reading prayers in my Father's family, suddenly a voice, or something like a voice, called aloud within me, yet so as not to be perceived by any of the persons who were kneeling around me—You must go and be instructed for the ministry.—The voice, or whatever it might be, was so exceedingly quick and powerful, that it was with difficulty I could proceed to the end of the prayer, which, I well remember, was that form for families at the end of the little book called "The Christian Monitor." As soon, however, as the prayer was ended, I made request to my Father to let me be trained for the Ministry. I told him all that I knew of the circumstance. He, of course, denied my request, thinking it was some whim I had got into my head, which would go off again when I had slept upon it. But the voice, or, what shall I call it? gave me no rest night or day for three weeks, when my ever dear, honoured, and indulgent Father gave way to my wishes, and put me into a train of study to qualify me for the university.

This is the simple fact, and all that I know of it. The reader will account for as he thinks proper. It cannot be called, I think, either a dream or a vision, with propriety. Some have been pleased to say, it is a little like unto the calling of Samuel. I pretend not to determine any thing about the fact.

fact. Only so it was. It produced a very important change in the course of my life. I bless God for it. And I thought it not unworthy of being recorded, now I am speaking upon a subject nearly allied thereto.

75. Mr. G—S— had a dream some years ago, of a kind similar to some of the foregoing. He thought in his sleep he received a letter from God, which he opened and read, the substance of which was as follows:—You must go to preach the gospel in a foreign land, unto a fallen people, a mixture of nations.—He thought he was conveyed to the place where the ship lay, in which he was to embark in an instant. The warf and ship appeared as plain to him as if he had been awake. He replied in his dream, Lord, I am willing to go in thy name; but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me. An answer to this was given; Fear not, for I am with thee. He awoke from his sleep greatly affected, revolved the dream in his mind for a long time, but knew not what it meant. However, six years after this he was providentially called to preach the gospel in America; and when he arrived at Peel, and saw the ship and warf, all came fresh into his mind; the ship, the place, and the warf being the very same he had seen in his dream six years before.

76. The following dream of the pious and learned Mr. Howe is very remarkable and divine. I
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will deliver it in his own words, and leave the reader to form what judgment he thinks proper upon it.

December 26, 1689.— After that I had long, seriously, and repeatedly thought with myself, that besides a full and undoubted assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying favoury taste and relish of them was also necessary; that with stronger force, and more powerful energy, they might penetrate into the most inward center of my heart, and there being most deeply fixed and rooted, govern my life; and that there could be no other sure ground whereon to conclude and pass a sound judgment on my good estate God-ward: and after I had, in my course of preaching been largely insisting on 2 Cor. 1. 12. this very morning I awoke out of a most ravishing and delightful dream, that a wonderful and copious stream of celestial rays, from the lofty throne of the divine Majesty, did seem to dart into my open and expanded breast. I have often since, with great complacency, reflected on that very signal pledge of special divine favour vouchsafed to me on that noted memorable day, and have, with repeated fresh pleasure, tasted the delights thereof. But what of the same kind I sensibly felt, through the admirable bounty of my God, and the most pleasant comforting influence of the Holy Spirit, on Oct. 22. 1704, far surpassed the most expressive words my thoughts can suggest. I then experienced an inexpressibly pleasant melting of heart, tears gushing out of my eyes

eyes for joy that God should shed abroad his love abundantly through the hearts of men; and that, for this very purpose, my own should be so signally possessed of and by his blessed Spirit. Rom. 5. 5.¹

77. The following extraordinary Narrative was related to me² by the very person who is the chief subject of it, as also by his two comrades in the vessel, whose veracity appears to me unquestionable.

There were two Brothers (of the name of Clarke) who had the command of a small trading vessel, in the Isle of Man; and, as they were lying at anchor, some distance from the harbour, waiting for a fair wind, a sailor on board wanted to go on shore, which they were unwilling to consent to. Being Methodists, the man had great enmity against them, and, therefore, after some personal abuse, he swore most desperately that he would not be hindered by them. Accordingly, he went down into the boat, which was lying at the side of the ship, and as he took the oar, in order to send himself to shore, it fell out of his hand, and he lay with his head hanging over the gunnel. For some time they apprehended he was going to sleep, but not seeing him move, one of the brothers got into the boat, and, shaking him by the shoulder, found he did not awake. Then looking upon his face, and feeling

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¹ This dream and the last have been recorded, the former in the Armenian Magazine, vol. 13. p. 237; the latter in Burnham's Pious Memorials, art. Howe.

² The Rev. E———d S———h.

that he was as cold as a corpse, Clarke cried out to his brother, The fellow is dead. They then fastened ropes about his body, and pulled him up into the vessel, and after stripping him, they threw pails of water upon his face, and over different parts of his body, in hopes this might be a means of rousing him, if he was in a trance or fit. Finding this ineffectual, they laid him on his belly, across a piece of timber, and one holding him by the head, and the other by the feet, they pulled him alternately, thinking that the friction might be of service. But as no signs of life appeared, they agreed to leave him upon deck, and to go to a vessel not far from them, that they might bring some of the crew to see that there were no marks of violence upon the body. After this was done, various efforts were used to restore the man to life; and, at last, he was heard to groan, and, shortly after, he opened his eyes. They then put him to bed in the cabin, where he lay for some time without speaking, being exceedingly weak. As Thomas Clarke was standing at the bed side, the other said to him, Oh, Tom, Tom, I have been a wicked wretch: I have used you and your brother very ill: can you forgive me? Clarke replied, Indeed I can, and do, with all my heart: and I hope God will forgive you. When he had regained some strength, he then addressed Clarke in the following manner: I have been out of the body, and have seen wonderful things. As soon as I jumped into
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the boat, my spirit departed, and I found myself in the custody of two devils, in the shape of black bears, who dragged me to a lime-kiln, out of which I saw flames of fire ascending. I shrieked horribly, and just as they were going to throw me in, an angel, dressed in white robes, whose face resembled Mr. Mason's, the Methodist preacher's, suddenly appeared, and said to the devils, He is not yours—let him go: upon which they immediately vanished. The angel took me by the arm, and led me from the lime-kiln, and when we had gone a little way, I observed a man, with a black mantle over his shoulders, standing up to his middle in mud, from which he was striving to extricate himself. On coming nearer to him, I knew him to be a companion of mine, and it was impressed on my mind that he was suffering there, because he neglected to pay a vow which he once made to God. We were both, some time ago, in a small fishing boat, and a great storm coming on, we expected nothing but death, therefore seeing ourselves in such danger, we prayed to God to deliver us, and promised upon our knees, that if he would bring us safe to shore, we would give a shilling a piece to the poor; but when we got to land, we never thought more about our vow. And now, Tom Clarke, as I do not think I shall live long, I find myself so very weak, I beseech you to speak to my wife and charge her to give a shilling to the poor for me, or I shall never be happy.

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When Clarke assured him he would, he then continued his discourse.—The angel, after this, led me to a beautiful river, at the other side of which, in a flowery meadow, I saw a great number of people, (chiefly Methodists) and among the rest, you and the Predestinarian that was arguing with you yesterday. At the time of your dispute, you may remember that he quoted this text of scripture: *The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil.* At this, thinking I was one of the reprobates that would be damned, I said within myself, Surely, from my past debauched life I must expect it, and therefore it is in vain for me to look for salvation. I may continue still in my wicked courses, and make myself as happy as I can while I live, since I must go to hell at last. Indeed I now believe that this was only a temptation of the devil; for as I saw you on the bank of the river, with the bible in your hand, opened in that very place where the text was, the angel said unto me, Tom Clarke is right—the other man is wrong—my grace is free for all, therefore free for you.—And now, to convince you that I am telling no lies, as you know I can neither read nor write, if you look into the bible, you will find that text in the 16th. chapter of Proverbs, and that the first letter of the chapter is a T.—Upon this, Clarke examined his bible, and finding it to be true, he desired the man to go on with his story.—Well (says he) after receiving some
comfort

comfort from what the angel said, I saw a large gate at the end of the field, which was studded all over with diamonds, and out of the key-hole the rays of the sun shone so brightly, that my eyes were quite dazzled; and, as I was admiring the sight, a white dove came through the key-hole, and flying straight across the river, struck me with force upon the breast, and while it was fluttering there with its wings, I found my life returning by degrees. He then told Tom Clarke, that if God would but spare him, he would become a new man, and that both he and his wife (whom before he had grossly abused for going to hear the Methodists) would join them; which they did soon after. He had been among them, I think, two years, when this account was given to me, and he was then walking in the fear of God, and happy in the light of his countenance. And though he was advanced in years, he had himself taught to read, that he might be able to search the scriptures, and learn from thence the truth as it is in Jesus. —

It were easy to multiply instances, but I need mention no more. These are clear and full as necessary. They are all matters of fact, authenticated as well as the nature of things will admit: and we usually say, Facts are stubborn things. In what manner will those who are incredulous in these mat-

ters account for them?¹ They establish incontestably, if they are admitted, the Being of God, and a particular providence; the existence of separate spirits, and the immortality of human souls, in opposition to the Atheists and Sadducees of the day. It will be observed, I produce them not as matters of opinion, but as matters of fact; and as facts authenticated in the most satisfactory manner. Some of them rest upon the faith of sacred history, some upon the credit of profane story, and others upon private testimony. The question is, how to account for them, so as to satisfy a religious and philosophic mind? An absolute denial of the facts will involve us in as great difficulties as the admission of them: for, if we deny some and not all, it will be incumbent on us to account for such as we cannot refuse credit to. If we reject the whole together, as incredible or impossible, then we must give a reasonable account why so many persons of the most respectable

¹Even Monsieur Bayle, that celebrated French scholar and philosopher, who was far from being over-stocked with credulity, could not withhold his assent from the doctrine of monitory dreams: "I think," says he, "we may say of dreams the same almost as of enchantments, that they are far less mysterious than people believe, and somewhat more than unbelievers fancy. The histories of all times and places relate, both with respect to dreams and magic, so many surprizing things, that those who obstinately deny them all, render themselves suspected, either of want of sincerity, or judgment to discern the force of the proofs. A violent prejudice, or a certain turn of mind, blinds their understanding, when they compare the reasons pro and con."

respectable characters, and, upon all other occasions, of the most undoubted veracity, should, upon this, endeavour to deceive the public, by asserting what they know to be false.² If we grant, that they believed their own tales, but were themselves deceived, then we must either give some satisfactory account of this strong illusion of their senses, or else admit the facts. If we deny the whole, without either rhyme or reason, and turn all such relations into ridicule; by the same mode of proceeding we may subvert every fact recorded in history. We grant the doctrine of dreams and night-visions is attended with difficulties, on which side soever we consider it; but then so is every other doctrine that can be proposed. So is the doctrine of the Divine existence; the Divine perfections; the doctrine of angels, spirits, and all invisible beings:³ so is the doctrine of creation, re-

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demption

““ A person who is terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres,” says Mr. Addison again, “ is much more reasonable, than one, who, contrary to the reports of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless. Could not I give myself up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons who are now living, and whom I cannot mistrust in other matters of fact. I might here add, that not only the historians, to whom we may join the poets, but likewise the philosophers of antiquity have favoured this opinion.”

SPECTATOR, 110.

³ Monsieur Le Clerc's sentiments on the doctrine of spirits are modest and just:—“ As for apparitions of spirits,” says this learned man, “ we cannot by any reason shew from the nature of the thing itself, that it is not possible for spirits to be joined with a subtle body; nor is it likely that so many nations, and

demption, renovation, dissolution, resurrection, immortality, eternal life: and indeed so is the doctrine of every object around us. If therefore we will believe no doctrine till we can fully account for it, and admit no facts till we are acquainted with all the circumstances attending them, we involve ourselves in greater difficulties than those we attempt to avoid. But if, without pretending to be wise above what is written, we tread in the good old path of our forefathers, and grant there is a God, and particular providence; that the soul of man is immortal, and exists in a separate state; and that there are such beings as guardian angels, the facts here recorded will easily be accounted for. If indeed there is no God and particular providence; or if the soul is not immortal, and there are no *such* beings as those just mentioned, I confess, I do not see what reasonable account can be given of these relations. The theories of anxiety of mind, strong imaginations, association, indigestion, and the like, seem to me utterly inadequate to the business.⁴ I will readily allow, that the

“ so remote in places and opinions should agree in a lie, as to all
 “ they have said concerning the apparition of spirits. It is
 “ much more likely, that the ground of the lies invented about
 “ this matter, was some true apparition, to which, as is usual, a
 “ world of other relations of the like kind have been feigned.”

View of the Invisible World.

Let the Reader consult Le Clerc on Gen. 12. 7. concerning revelations by dreams, and Smith's Select Discourses, p. 161—273.

⁴The Author of the Mirror, before quoted, concludes his two very sensible Papers on dreaming in the following manner:—

the cry of superstition and credulity may be a sufficient answer to ninety nine in a hundred of the dreams and visions which are daily related; but, I apprehend, such answer will by no means give satisfaction to a sober and religious mind, in most of the cases which have here been laid before the Reader.⁵

But,

“ To conclude: Providence certainly superintends the affairs of men; and often, we know not how often, interposes for our preservation. It would, therefore, be presumptuous to affirm, that supernatural cautions, in regard to futurity, are never communicated in dreams. The design of these remarks (on common dreams) is not to contradict any authentic experience, or historical fact, but only to shew, that dreams may proceed from a variety of causes that have nothing supernatural in them: and that, though we are not much acquainted with the nature of this wonderful mode of perception, we know enough of it to see, that it is not useless, or superfluous, but may, on the contrary, answer some purposes of great importance to our welfare both in soul and body.”

⁵Several of the cases before related are very surprizing, and, if true, undoubtedly supernatural. But the following narrative, which I have since met with, is very much out of the common way, and appears highly incredible. The late Mr. Wesley, however, believed it, and gave his reasons for so doing. Those reasons, with the narrative itself, I will here submit to the Reader's consideration, and leave him to form what judgment he thinks proper both of it and them.

May 25, 1768, and the two following days, being at Sunderland, I took down from one who had feared God from her infancy, one of the strangest accounts I ever read. And yet I can find no pretence to disbelieve it. The well-known character of the person, excludes all suspicion of fraud. And the nature of the circumstances themselves, excludes the possibility of a delusion.

It is true there are several of them, which I do not comprehend. But this is with me a very slender objection. For what is it which I do comprehend, even of the things I see daily? Truly not

“ The smallest grain of sand or spire of grass.”

I know not how the one grows, or how the particles of the other

But, it is continually asked by those who oppose the reality of præternatural dreams, *Cui bono?* to what

cohere together. What pretence have I then to deny well-attested facts, because I cannot comprehend them?

It is true likewise, that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives fables. I am sorry for it: and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest, against this violent compliment, which so many that believe the bible pay, to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge, these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition not only to the bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know, (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft, is in effect, giving up the bible. And they know, on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air, (deism, atheism, materialism) falls to the ground. I know no reason therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands. Indeed there are numerous arguments besides, which abundantly confute their vain imaginations. But we need not be hooted out of one: neither reason nor religion require this.

One of the capital objections to all these accounts, which I have known urged over and over is this, "Did you ever see an apparition yourself?" No: nor did I ever see a murder. Yet I believe there is such a thing: yea, and that in one place or another murder is committed every day. Therefore I cannot as a reasonable man deny the fact; although I never saw it, and perhaps never may. The testimony of unexceptionable witnesses fully convinces me both of the one and the other.

But to set this aside, it has been confidently alledged, that many of these have seen their error, and have been clearly convinced, that the supposed præternatural operation was the mere contrivance of artful men. The famous instance of this, which has been spread far and wide, was the drumming in Mr. Mompeffon's house at Tedworth; who it was said acknowledged, "It was all a trick, and that he had found out the whole contrivance." Not so. My eldest brother then at Christ Church, Oxon, enquired of Mr. Mompeffon his fellow collegian, "whether his father had acknowledged this or not?" He an-

what purpose? Why should God interpose, or suffer his invisible agents to interpose in the paltry concerns of mortals?

“ Nec

swered, “ The resort of gentlemen to my father’s house, was so great, he could not bear the expence. He therefore took no pains to confute the report that he had found out the cheat: although he, and I, and all the family knew, the account which was published to be punctually true.”

This premised, I proceed to as remarkable a narrative as any that has fallen under my notice. The reader may believe it if he pleases: or may disbelieve it, without any offence to me. Mean time let him not be offended if I believe it, till I see better reason to the contrary.

1. Elizabeth Hobson was born in Sunderland, in the year 1744. Her father dying when she was three or four years old, her uncle, Thomas Rea, a pious man brought her up as his own daughter. She was serious from a child, and grew up in the fear of God. Yet she had deep and sharp convictions of sin, till she was about sixteen years of age, when she found peace with God, and from that time the whole tenour of her behaviour was suitable to her profession.

On Wednesday, May 25, 1768, and the three following days, I talked with her at large. But it was with great difficulty I prevailed on her to speak. The substance of what she said was as follows.

2. From my childhood, when any of our neighbours died, whether men, women, or children, I used to see them either just when they died or a little before. And I was not frightened at all it was so common. Indeed many times I did not then know they were dead. I saw many of them by day, many by night. Those that came when it was dark, brought light with them. I observed all little children and many grown persons had a bright, glorious light round them. But many had a gloomy dismal light, and a dusky cloud over them.

3. When I told my uncle this he did not seem to be at all surprized at it. But at several times he said, “ Be not afraid: only take care to fear and serve God. As long as he is on your side, none will be able to hurt you.” At other times he said, (dropping a word now and then, but seldom answering me any questions about it) “ Evil spirits very seldom appear, but between eleven at night and two in the morning. But after they have appeared to a person a year, they frequently come in the

"Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
"Inciderit."

"Nor

"day time. Whatever spirits, good or bad, come in the day,
"they come at sun-rise, at noon, or at sun-set."

4. When I was between twelve and thirteen, my uncle had a lodger, who was a very wicked man. One night I was sitting in my chamber, about half hour after ten, having by accident put out my candle, when he came in, all over on a flame. I cried out, "William, why do you come in so to fright me?" He said nothing, but went away. I went after him into his room: but found he was fast asleep in bed. A day or two after he fell ill, and within the week died in raging despair.

5. I was between fourteen and fifteen, when I went very early one morning to fetch up the kine. I had two fields to cross into a low ground which was said to be haunted. Many persons had been frightened there: and I had myself often seen men and women, (so many, at times, that they are out of count) go just by me and vanish away. This morning, as I came towards it, I heard a confused noise, as of many people quarrelling. But I did not mind it, and went on, till I came near the gate. I then saw on the other side a young man drest in purple, who said, "It is too early: Go back from whence you came. The Lord be with you and blefs you." And presently he was gone.

6. When I was about sixteen, my uncle fell ill, and grew worse and worse for three months. One day having been sent out on an errand, I was coming home through a lane, when I saw him in the field coming swiftly towards me. I ran to meet him; but he was gone. When I came home I found him calling for me. As soon as I came to his bed side, he clasped his arms round my neck; and bursting into tears earnestly exhorted me, to continue in the ways of God, kept his hold, till he sunk down and died; and even then they could hardly unclasp his fingers. I would fain have died with him and wished to be buried with him, dead or alive.

7. From that time I was crying from morning to night, and praying that I might see him. I grew weaker and weaker, till one morning about one o'clock, as I was lying crying as usual, I heard some noise, and rising up, saw him come to the bed side. He looked much displeased, shook his head at me, and in a minute or two went away.

8. About a week after I took my bed and grew worse and

“ Nor let a God in person stand display’d,

“ Unless the labouring plot deserve his aid.”

No man, one should suppose, would ask questions like these, by way of getting clear of the supernatural

worfe, till in six or seven days my life was despaired of. Then about eleven at night, my uncle came in, looked well pleased, and sat down on the bedside. He came every night after at the same time, and stayed till cock-crowing. I was exceeding glad, and kept my eyes fixt upon him, all the time he stayed. If I wanted drink or any thing, though I did not speak or stir, he fetched it, and set it on the chair by the bedside. Indeed I could not speak; many times I strove, but could not move my tongue. Every morning when he went away he waved his hand to me, and I heard delightful music, as if many persons were singing together.

9. In about six weeks I grew better. I was then musing one night, Whether I did well, in desiring he might come? And I was praying, that God would do his own will, when he came in, and stood by the bedside. But he was not in his usual dress: he had on a white robe which reached down to his feet. He looked quite well pleased. About one, there stood by him a person in white, taller than him and exceeding beautiful. He came with the singing as of many voices, and continued till near cock-crowing. Then my uncle smiled and waved his hand towards me twice or thrice. They went away with inexpressible sweet music, and I saw him no more.

10. In a year after this, a young man courted me, and in some months we agreed to be married. But he purposed to take another voyage first, and one evening went a-board his ship. About eleven o’clock, going out to look for my mother, I saw him standing at his mother’s door with his hands in his pockets, and his hat pulled over his eyes. I went to him, and reached my hand, to put up his hat. But he went swiftly by me, and I saw the wall on the other side of the lane part as he went through, and then immediately close after him. At ten the next morning he died.

11. A few days after, John Simpson, one of our neighbours, a man that truly feared God, and one with whom I was particularly acquainted, went to sea, as usual. He sailed out on a Tuesday. The Friday night following, between eleven and twelve o’clock, I heard one walking in my room, and every step sound-

supernatural part of the phenomenon of dreaming, who embraces the wonderful scheme of redemption exhibited

ed, as he was stepping in water. He then came to the bedside in his sea-jacket, all wet, and stretched his hand over me. Three drops of water fell on my breast, and felt as cold as ice. I strove to wake his wife, who lay with me; but I could not, any more than if she was dead. Afterwards I heard, he was cast away that night. In less than a minuet he went away. But he came to me every night, for six or seven nights following, between eleven and two. Before he came and when he went away, I always heard sweet music. Afterwards he came both day and night: every night about twelve with the music at his coming and going, and every day at sun-rise, noon, and sun-set. He came whatever company I was in; at church, in the preaching-house, at my class: and was always just before me, changing his posture as I changed mine. When I sat he sat; when I kneeled he kneeled; when I stood he stood likewise. I would fain have spoke to him, but I could not; when I tried, my heart sunk within me: mean time it affected me more and more, so that I lost both my stomach, my colour, and my strength. This continued ten weeks, while I pined away not daring to tell any one. At last he came four or five nights without any music, and looked exceeding sad. On the fifth night he drew the curtains of the bed violently to and fro; still looking wishfully at me, and as one quite distressed. This he did two nights. On the third, I lay down about eleven, on the side of the bed. I quickly saw him walking up and down the room. Being resolved to speak to him, but unwilling any should hear, I rose and went up into the garret. When I opened the door, I saw him walking toward me, and shrunk back; on which he stopped and stood at a distance. I said, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what is your business with me?" He answered, "Betsey, God forgive you, for keeping me so long from my rest. Have you forgot what you promised before I went to sea? To look to my children, if I was drowned? You must stand to your word or I cannot rest." I said, "I wish I was dead." He said, "Say not so. You have more to go through before then. And yet, if you knew as much as I do, you would not care how soon you died.—You may bring the children on in their learning while they live: they have but a short time." I said, "I will take all the care I can." He added, "Your brother has wrote for you, to come to Jamaica: But if you go it will hurt

exhibited in the gospel. For the attention of the Almighty to the concerns of man is therein seen to be

“your soul. You have also thoughts of altering your condition: but if you marry him you think of, it will draw you from God, and you will neither be happy here nor hereafter. Keep close to God, and go on in the way wherein you have been brought up.” I asked, “How do you spend your time?” He answered, “In songs of praise. But of this you will know more by and by: for where I am, you will surely be. I have lost much happiness by coming to you: And I should not have stayed so long without using other means to make you speak: but the Lord would not suffer me to fright you. Have you any thing more to say? It draws near two, and after that I cannot stay. I shall only come to you twice more before the death of my two children. God bless you.” Immediately I heard such singing, as if a thousand voices joined together. He then went down stairs and I followed him to the first landing. He smiled, and I said “I desire you will come back.” He stood still till I came to him. I asked him one or two questions, which he immediately answered; but added, “I wish you had not called me back; for now I must take something from you.” He paused a little and said, “I think you can best part with the hearing of your left ear.” He laid his hand upon it, and in the instant it was deaf as a stone. And it was several years before I recovered the least hearing of it. The cock crowed as he went out of the door: and then the music ceased. The elder of his children died at about three years and a half, the younger, before he was five years old. He appeared before the death of each, but without speaking; after that, I saw him no more.

12. A little before Michaelmas 1763, my brother George, who was a good young man, went to sea. The day after Michaelmas-day, about midnight, I saw him standing by my bedside, surrounded with a glorious light, and looking earnestly at me. He was wet all over. That night the ship in which he sailed, split upon a rock, and all the crew were drowned.

13. On April 9, 1767, about midnight, I was laying awake, and I saw my brother John standing by my bedside. Just at that time he died in Jamaica.

14. By his death I became intitled to an house in Sunderland, which was left us by my grandfather, John Hobson, an exceeding wicked man, who was drowned fourteen years ago. I employed an attorney to recover it from my aunts, who kept possession

be such as almost baffles belief, and causes the very angels to stand amazed at the Divine condescension.

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of it. But finding more difficulty than I expected, in the beginning of December I gave it up. Three or four nights after, as I rose from prayer, a little before eleven, I saw him standing at a small distance. I cried out, "Lord bless me! what brings you here?" He answered "You have given up the house: Mr. Parker advised you so to do: but if you do I shall have no rest. Indeed Mr. Dunn, whom you have hitherto employed, will do nothing for you. Go to Durham: employ an attorney there, and it will be recovered." His voice was loud, and so hollow and deep, that every word went through me. His lips did not move at all, (nor his eyes) but the sound seemed to rise out of the floor. When he had done speaking, he turned about, and walked out of the room.

15. In January, as I was sitting on the bedside, a quarter before twelve he came in, stood before me, looked earnestly at me, then walked up and down and stood and looked again. This he did for half an hour: and thus he came every other night, for about three weeks. All this time he seemed angry, and some times his look was quite horrid and furious. One night I was sitting up in bed crying, when he came and began to pull off the cloaths. I strove to touch his hand, but could not; on which he shrunk back and smiled.

16. The next night but one, about twelve, I was again sitting up and crying, when he came and stood at the bedside. As I was looking for an handkerchief he walked to the table, took one up, brought and dropt it upon the bed. After this, he came three or four nights and pulled the cloaths off, throwing them on the other side of the bed.

17. Two nights after he came as I was sitting on the bedside, and after walking to and fro, snatched the handkerchief from my neck. I fell into a swoon. When I came to myself he was standing just before me. Presently he came close to me, dropt it on the bed, and went away.

18. Having had a long illness the year before, having taken much cold by his frequent pulling off the cloaths, and being worn out by these appearances, I was now mostly confined to my bed. The next night, soon after eleven, he came again. I asked, "In God's name, why do you torment me thus? You know, it is impossible for me to go to Durham now. But I have a fear that you are not happy, and beg to know, whether you are or

If therefore God acts not without reason, man must be of much higher account in his estimation

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than

not? He answered, after a little pause, "That is a bold question for you to ask. So far as you knew me to do amiss in my life-time, do you take care to do better." I said, "It is a shocking affair, to live and die after that manner." He replied, "It is no time for reflections now: what is done cannot be undone." I said, "It must be a great happiness to die in the Lord." He said, "Hold your tongue! Hold your tongue! At your peril never mention such a word before me again!" I was frightened, and strove to lift up my heart to God. He gave a shriek, and sunk down at three times, with a loud groan at each time. Just as he disappeared, there was a large flash of fire, and I fainted away.

Three days after, I went to Durham, and put the affair into Mr. Hugill the attorney's hands. The next night, about one, he came in; but on my taking up the bible, went away. A month after, he came about eleven. I said, "Lord, bless me! What has brought you here again?" He said, "Mr. Hugill has done nothing but writ one letter: you must write or go to Durham again. It may be decided in a few days." I asked "Why do not you go to my aunts, who keep me out of it?" He answered, "I have no power to go to them. And they cannot bear it. If I could, I would go to them, were it only to warn them: for I doubt, where I am, I shall get too many to bear me company." He added, "Take care: there is mischief laid in Peggy's hands: she will strive to meet you coming from your clais. I do not speak to hinder you from going to it, but that you may be cautious. Let some one go with you and come back with you; though whether you will escape or no, I cannot tell." I said, "She can do no more than God will let her." He answered, "We have all too little to do with him. Mention that word no more. As soon as this is decided meet me at Boyldon-hill, between twelve and one at night." I said, "That is a lone place for a woman to go to at that time of night. I am willing to meet you at the Ballast-hills, or in the church-yard." He said, "That will not do. But what are you afraid of?" I answered, "I am not afraid of you, but of rude men." He said, "I will set you safe, both thither and back again." I asked, "May I not bring a minister with me?" He replied, "Are you thereabouts? I will not be seen by any but you. You have plagued

than this objection supposes. It has been said, "The
 " eternal salvation of one soul is of greater import-
 ance

" ed me fore enough already. If you bring any with you, take
 " what follows."

From this time he appeared every night, between eleven and two. If I put out the fire and candle, in hopes I should not see him, it did not avail. For as soon as he came, all the room was light, but with a dismal light, like flaming brimstone. But when ever I took up the bible, or kneeled down, yea, or prayed in my heart, he was gone.

On Thursday, May 12, he came about eleven, as I was sitting by the fire. I asked, "In God's name, what do you want?" He said, "You must either go or write to Durham. I cannot stay from you 'till this is decided: and I cannot stay where I am." When he went away, I fell into a violent passion of crying, seeing no end of my trouble. In this agony I continued till after one and then fell into a fit. About two I came to myself, and saw standing at the bed-side, one in a white robe, which reached down to his feet. I cried, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—" He said, "The Lord is with you: I am come to comfort you. What cause have you to complain and murmur thus? Why do you mourn thus for your friends? Pray for them, and leave them to God. Arise and pray." I said, "I can pray none." He said, "But God will help you: only keep close to God; you are backward likewise in praying with others, and afraid to receive the Lord's supper. Break through that backwardness and that fear. The Lord blefs you and be ever with you!" As he went away, I heard many voices singing Hallelujah, with such melody as I never heard before. All my trouble was gone, and I wanted nothing but to fly away with them.

Sat. 28. About twelve, my grandfather stood at the bedside. I said, "In God's name, what do you want?" He said, "You do not make an end of this thing: get it decided as soon as possible. My coming is as uneasy to myself, as it can be to you." Before he came there was a strong smell of burning, and the room was full of smoke, which got into my eyes, and almost blinded me for some time after.

Wednesday, June 21. About sunset, I was coming up-stairs at Mrs. Knot's and I saw him coming towards me out of the opposite room. He went close by me on the stair-head. Before I saw him I smelt a strong smell of burning: and so did Miss Hof-

“ance, and big with greater events, than the salvation of a whole kingdom, for any limited time,

R 2 “though

mor. It got into my throat and almost stifled me. I sat down, and fainted away.

On Friday, July 3. I was sitting at dinner, when I thought I heard one come along the passage. I looked about, and saw my aunt, Margaret Scot of Newcastle, standing at my back. On Saturday I had a letter informing me, that she died on that day.” Thus far Elizabeth Hobson.

On Sunday, July 10. I received the following letter from a friend to whom I had recommended her.

“Sunderland, 6 July, 1768.

“I wrote you word before, that Elizabeth Hobson, was put into possession of the house. The same night her old visitant, who had not troubled her for some time came again and said: “You must meet me at Boyldon-hill, on Thursday night, a little before twelve. You will see many appearances, who will call you to come to them: but do not stir, neither give them any answer. A quarter after twelve, I shall come and call you: but still do not answer nor stir. She said, ‘It is an hardship upon me for you to desire me to meet you there. Why cannot you take your leave now?’ He answered, “It is for your good that I desire it. I can take my leave of you now. But if I do I must take something from you, which you would not like to part with.” She said, ‘May not a few friends come with me?’ He said, “They may; but they must not be present when I come.”

That night, twelve of us met at Mr. Davison’s and spent some time in prayer. God was with us of a truth. Then six of us went with her to the place, leaving the rest to pray for us. We came thither a little before twelve, and then stood at a small distance from her. It being a fine night, we kept her in our sight, and spent the time in prayer. She stood there ‘till a few minutes after one. When we saw her move, we went to meet her. She said, ‘Thank God it is all over and done. I found every thing as he told me. I saw many appearances, who called me to them; but I did not answer or stir. Then he came and called me at a distance; but I took no notice. Soon after he came up to me and said,’ “You are come well fortified.” He then gave her the reasons, why he required her to meet him at that place; and why he could take his leave there, and not in the house, without taking something from her. But withal he charged her to tell this to no one; adding, “If you disclose this

“ though it were for the space of ten thousand ages:
 “ because there will come up a point, an instant in
 “ eternity, when that one soul shall have existed as
 “ many ages as all the individuals of a whole king-
 “ dom, ranged in close succession, will, in the whole,
 “ have existed, in the space of ten thousand ages.
 “ Therefore one soul is capable of a larger share of
 “ happiness or misery, throughout an endless eter-
 “ nity, than a whole kingdom is capable of in ten
 “ thousand ages. ” The seraphic Young hath car-
 ried this consideration still further:

“ Know’st thou th’ importance of a soul immortal?

“ Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!

“ Amazing pomp! redouble this amaze!

“ Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;

“ Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all,

“ And calls th’ astonishing magnificence

“ Of unintelligent creation poor.”

If such is the value of a human soul, we need no
 longer ask, why God interposes in a supernatural
 manner

“ to any creature, I shall be under a necessity, of troubling you
 “ as long as you live. If you do not, I shall never trouble you,
 “ nor see you any more, either in time or eternity.” He then
 bid her farewell, waved his hand, and disappeared.

WESLEY’S WORKS, Vol. 32. p. 180—199.

The profound Pascal likewise tells us, “ that the whole
 “ system of bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth, and the
 “ kingdoms of it, are not fit to be opposed in value to the lowest
 “ mind or spirit; because spirit is endued with the knowledge
 “ and apprehension of all this; whereas body is utterly stupid
 “ and insensible.”

Thoughts on Religion, p. 148.

manner, upon some occasions, when we should little expect it. We may be assured he has reasons, and the best reasons, for his conduct, in all cases whatever. We are ill judges of propriety. We see but a little way. Every supernatural interposition may, for any thing we know to the contrary, have consequences very important, and extremely remote,² though it may appear to us insignificant in no small degree. Our business therefore is not with the importance of supernatural interpositions, but with the interpositions themselves. If the facts are once established, we may be assured there is a reason for them

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"In heaven's great and constant effort for our welfare is capitally written the dignity of man. That is a key to the moral world, and opens, and explains the reason of all God's, otherwise mysterious, conduct in it. Every step of which is evidently calculated for man's present, or future, felicity; or both. The long shining series, the golden chain of all God's marvellous acts, from the beginning to the close of time, speaks his uninterrupted regard for human nature; and what can more loudly proclaim human dignity than this?"

Young's Centaur not Fabulous.

See some fine sentiments on the immortality of the soul in Smith's Select Discourses, p. 54—115.

"Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
 "May, must be right, as relative to all.
 "In human works, though labour'd on with pain,
 "A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
 "In God's, one single can its end produce;
 "Yet serves to second too some other use.
 "So man, who here seems principal alone,
 "Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown;
 "Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 "'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole."

POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN. B. 1.

in the divine administration, and a reason sufficiently cogent.

But, waving all other, may not the Divine Being permit, occasionally, such events to happen as we have been speaking of, with intent to keep up in the minds of his creatures a persuasion of a separate state of existence, and of his own government of the world? If no other reason could be assigned, this alone appears to me sufficiently grand and important to justify such a proceeding. For, does it not seem proper, *a priori*, that man should be assured of his own immortality?³ And may not the Deity think good to confirm the declarations of his word, when his wisdom judges meet, by sensible appearances? Is it not fitting that he should govern his own world, and that his vice-gerent man should have every suitable proof, that he actually doth preside over the work of his own hands? Are not the bulk of mankind, notwithstanding all that hath been done to enlighten them, extremely low and grovelling in their views? Is not every attempt to meliorate our race, and raise us from the ruins of our fall, comparatively, to little purpose? And has not the experience that many men have of significant dreams and night-visions a more powerful effect upon their minds, than

³Mr. Lock has written at large on the nature of body and spirit in his excellent "Essay concerning Human Understanding;" and he tells us, that "we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit, " as we have of body," and that "the idea which belongs to spirit " is at least as clear as that which belongs to body." Vol. I. p. 247.

than the most pure and refined precepts? It should seem then, that the belief of these supernatural phenomena, upon certain occasions, is so far from being weak and enthusiastic, as our rational gentry, *falsely* so called, pretend, that it is consistent with the soundest principles of reason and religion; and that whosoever, *universally*, rejects the doctrine, swallows absurdities infinitely greater than those he wishes to avoid.

The sum of what has been said is this: Monitory dreams and nocturnal visions, of various kinds, have been frequent from the earliest accounts of time. We have all the evidence of this fact that we have for any other facts recorded in history. Sacred and profane story are equally full and satisfactory upon the subject. Several of those we have produced, can, I apprehend, neither be fairly denied nor accounted for, upon any other principle, than that of

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“ It is perfectly consistent with our fullest belief of a merciful
“ providence, that some occasional evidences should be given of a
“ state after death: nor does it at all lessen this probability, that
“ instances of such appearances are very rare, because whenever
“ they have happened, or do happen, it is to be supposed, that rea-
“ sons subsist for it, which are at present unknown to us. Witch-
“ craft is perverting nature; but this is not the case with appari-
“ tions any more than dreams, and many other proofs that are
“ given of the compound nature of man. We confess, indeed, that
“ this is a subject enveloped in considerable obscurity, and that it is
“ the source of much weakness and imposture; but all this will not
“ warrant a peremptory conclusion against the hypothesis of appa-
“ ritions, because it is a subject, of which we are not as yet compe-
“ tent to judge.”

EUROPEAN MAG. for Feb. 1792. p. 109.

an agency distinct and separate from the mind of man, and the common, well known powers of human nature. All those cases from the bible, namely, the first seventeen in this collection, seem to be directly from God, or his holy angels. Those from the Heathen authors and other Ancients appear to have come from some separate existences, good or bad. But that of Alexander the Great, number 33, is particularly worthy of heavenly communication. Number 76 appears to have been from the Holy Spirit of God, agreeably to the oeconomy of the gospel. Numbers 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, and 77, seem all likewise to have been the effects of angelic influence upon the human mind. If any persons should be disposed to object to the supposition, let them recollect, that the agency of angels is every where inculcated in the holy scriptures; and, particularly, that they have their several distinct charges.—*Take heed,* says our blessed Saviour, *that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*⁵ And St Paul says, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*⁶

Others

⁵Mat. 18. 10.—⁶Heb. 1. 14.—Let the Reader, who wishes for more satisfaction, consult archbishop Tillotson's 75th Sermon on "The nature, office, and employment of good angels."

Others of the foregoing cases prove incontestably the separate existence of human spirits; that man doth not die like the beasts that perish; and that neither doth his soul sleep in the dust with the body till the morning of the resurrection; but that he continues to exist, in a state of real sensibility, good or bad, according to his conduct in the present life. This, I think, is clear from Numbers 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50, 53, 55, 58, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, and 72. If the truth of any one, or more, of these facts should be called in question, yet there are others of them attended with all the evidence of which any thing of the kind is capable. An unbeliever may cavil with them, and raise several plausible objections against the whole, as he may do against every thing else, even the truth of scripture and the existence of God (Voltaire has done the former, and Hammon the latter) but one may defy any man to give a fair, clear, solid answer to each of the above cases, on any other supposition than that which is admitted in these papers; or, at least, on the mere acknowledged principles of human nature.

If all this is so (and let him deny it who can; though I know, as is just observed, ingenious men will prove or disprove any thing, it matters not by what kind of evidence) if, I say, all this is so, what becomes of the gloomy principle of our modern Sadducees, who pretend the soul sleeps in the dust with the body? For, one single, well authenticated, instance

stance of a human soul's being permitted to revisit the frail abodes of mortals, after dissolution, overturns their whole hypothesis root and branch. Indeed, that one declaration of our Saviour might suffice, if there were no other recorded in holy scripture:—*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is still stronger, if possible, for the doctrine of a separate existence, and an immediate consciousness of happiness or misery after the dissolution of our bodies*:—*There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full*

*Mat. 10. 28. Dr. Jortin reasons thus upon this text:—"If the soul hath such a necessary dependence upon the body, that when this dies, that dies with it,—then he who kills the body, would with the same stroke kill the soul also. But our Saviour tells us that this is impossible, because the soul remains after the dissolution of the body, or is out of the reach of human or created power. If it be said that our Saviour only means the utter and eternal destruction of the soul, which no one can effect, because God hath promised us a resurrection to a second life, this would be a mere shift to avoid the force of a plain text. For in this flat and far-fetched sense, our Lord might as well have denied that men can kill the body, because at the resurrection we shall again consist of soul and body, knowing ourselves to be the same persons that we were before".

Sermons, vol. 2. p. 374.

*Homer introduces the departed spirit of Patroclus as appearing to Achilles in his sleep in the twenty third book of his Iliad, with great beauty, where he gives us the sentiments of the Ancients on the subject of separate existence. It will gratify the English reader to lay the passage before him in the words of Mr. Pope.

*full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs
which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs
came*

—“Great Pelides, stretch'd along the shore,
“ Where dash'd on rocks the broken billows roar,
“ Lies inly groaning; while on either hand
“ The martial Myrmidons confus'dly stand.
“ Along the grass his languid members fall,
“ Tir'd with his chase around the Trojan wall;
“ Hush'd by the murmurs of the rolling deep,
“ At length he sinks in the soft arms of sleep.
“ When lo! the shade, before his closing eyes,
“ Of sad Patroclus rose, or seem'd to rise;
“ In the same robe he living wore, he came;
“ In stature, voice, and pleasing look the same.
“ The form familiar hover'd o'er his head,
“ And sleeps Achilles (thus the phantom said) }
“ Sleeps my Achilles, his Patroclus dead? }
“ Living I seem'd his dearest, tend'rest care,
“ But now forgot, I wander in the air.
“ Let my pale corse the rites of burial know,
“ And give me entrance in the realms below:
“ 'Till then, the spirit finds no resting place,
“ But here and there, the unbody'd spectres chase
“ The vagrant dead around the dark abode,
“ Forbid to cross th' irremeable flood.
“ Now give thy hand; for to the farther shore
“ When once we pass, the soul returns no more:
“ When once the last funereal flames ascend,
“ No more shall meet Achilles and his friend;
“ No more our thoughts to those we lov'd make known;
“ Or quit the dearest, to converse alone.

.....
“ 'Tis true, 'tis certain; man, tho' dead, retains
“ Part of himself; th' immortal mind remains:
“ The form subsists without the body's aid,
“ A'erial semblance, and an empty shade!”

In the above passage Homer followed the philosophy of the Egyptians, who supposed man to be compounded of three parts, an intelligent mind, a vehicle for that mind, and a body. St. Paul seems to have had the same ideas when he said to the Thessalonians, *I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless.* See more to the same purpose in the notes of Pope's transla-

came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This is the parable. The poor man died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

What

tion of Homer's Iliad, book 23, line 92, &c. See also the sixth book of Virgil's Aeneis.—Consult likewise Cicero's Tusculan Disputations.

What was carried? Not his body surely. That was committed to the dust from whence it was taken. But his spiritual part, after its separation from the body, was immediately conducted by the angels of God to the bosom of Abraham, the father of the faithful.—*To Abraham's bosom.*—Does not this also imply, that Abraham was, not only in a state of conscious existence, but of actual happiness?—*The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes.* His body with great pomp and state was interred among his ancestors, but his soul, the immortal part of his nature, was immediately sensible of having died out of the favour of it's Maker.

If it should be replied, that all this is but a parable. It is true. But parables, though not real histories, are figurative representations of real truths. And one of the truths represented by this parable, is the immediate happiness and misery of the souls of the rich man and Lazarus, after the death of their bodies. But if real histories and matters of fact might be of greater avail in this business, a very remarkable one presents itself, as directly to our present purpose as possible:—*And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which*
he

he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone: and they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.⁹

Thus it may be observed, here is, first, a positive declaration from the mouth of the Saviour of the world, that the soul of man cannot die.¹ Here is then, secondly, a parabolical representation of real, sensible,

⁹Luke 9. 28—36.

¹There are various arguments from nature and reason, besides those infallible ones adduced from holy scripture, in favour of the soul's immortality, which seem to me incapable of any solid and satisfactory answer. Mr. Addison has thrown some of them together at one view, in those well known and justly admired lines, which he puts into the mouth of Cato:—

- “ It must be so—Plato, thou reason’st well!
- “ Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
- “ This longing after immortality?
- “ Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
- “ Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
- “ Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
- “ ’Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
- “ ’Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
- “ And intimates eternity to man.——

sensible, conscious existence, and immediate happiness or misery after dissolution. And then here is, thirdly, a plain, historical matter of fact, that two persons the most renowned among the saints of the Old Testament (one being the giver, and the other the restorer, of the law) appeared on earth, and conversed with the Lord Jesus Christ concerning his approaching death. This seems a sufficient answer to every objection. It is impossible *fairly* to set the evidence

- " The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
- " At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
- " The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
- " Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
- " But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
- " Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
- " The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

This is the soliloquy of the above celebrated Roman. The no less celebrated Athenian, Alcibiades, though a man of a boundless love of pleasure, has delivered one of a similar kind:—"I am now wholly alone, my ears are not entertained with music, my eyes with beauty, nor any of my senses so forcibly affected, as to divert the course of my inward thoughts: methinks there is something sacred in myself, now I am alone. What is this being of mine? I came into it without my choice; and yet Socrates says it is to be imputed to me. In this repose of my senses, wherein they communicate nothing strongly to myself, I taste, methinks, a being distinct from their operation. Why may not then my soul exist, when she is wholly gone out of these organs? I can perceive my faculties grow stronger, the less I admit the pleasures of sense; and the nearer I place myself to a bare existence, the more worthy, the more noble, the more celestial does that existence appear to me. If my soul is weakened rather than improved by all that the body administers to her, she may reasonably be supposed to be designed for a mansion more suitable than this, wherein what delights her diminishes her excellence, and that which afflicts her adds to her perfection. There is an hereafter, and I will not fear to be immortal for the sake of Athens."

evidence aside. One had been dead many hundreds of years, and the other translated, that he should not see death, and yet both appeared, and were seen conversing with Jesus, by three witnesses the most unexceptionable, who either sealed, or were at all times ready to seal, their testimony with their blood. And it seems to me, that one such clear, indisputable fact speaks more powerfully than a thousand subtil reasonings, made use of by vain and self-conceited philosophers,² upon any given subject whatever. But if these facts should appear to be many in number, and *the spirits of just men made perfect* should have frequently visited our world, by the high permission of heaven, then it must be allowed, that a state of separate existence is according to the general laws of nature, and a fundamental principle of God's eternal empire.³

From

²True philosophy is the handmaid of true religion. But there is a spurious kind of wisdom much in vogue, which assumes the name, and which yet is a stranger to the nature of true philosophy. The followers of this specious wisdom are usually mighty pretenders to reason, freedom of thought, liberality of sentiment, and a great many other fine things, with which they amuse themselves and their friends, while, at the same time, they are the mere slaves of their lusts and disorderly inclinations. Or if they are decent in their morals, they are usually under the dominion of pride, conceit, and various other vices of the mind.—*From such turn away.*

³The existence of the human soul in a separate state, as a principle distinct from the body, is a doctrine frequently and strongly inculcated in holy scripture. The above three passages to that purpose appear to me unanswerable: at least I have never seen any tolerable answer given to them. I will, however, in this note throw a few other scriptures promiscuously together, which, by a just and fair interpretation, seem clearly to convey the same meaning:—*And the*

From the foregoing extraordinary relations, and these reasonings upon them, it appears, I think, first, that there is a God, because there can be no effect without a cause. Secondly, that this God undoubtedly exerciseth a particular providence among mankind, either by his own direct agency, or the agen-

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Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, Gen. 2. 7.—Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it, Ecc. 12. 7.—Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise, Luke 23. 43.—Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, Luke 23. 46.—Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, Acts 7. 59.—Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations, Luke 16. 9.—A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, Luke 24. 39.—I think it right as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up, knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me, 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14.—I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth; such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth; how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. 12. 2—4.—I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thel. 5. 23.—We know if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven, knowing that while we sojourn in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. And we labour, whether present or absent, to be accepted of him, 2 Cor. 5. 1—9.—To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, Phil. 1. 21, 23.—The last passage of scripture I shall mention, is that remarkable one in the book of Revelation, where the souls of the righteous are described as in a waking condition. I saw, says St. John, under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God; and they cried, How long, O Lord holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood? And it was said to them that they should still rest for a little season, Rev. 6. 9, 10.

ty of angels, who are his ministers in the government of the world. And, thirdly, that the souls of men do actually exist in a state of sensibility and activity, after they are separated from the body.³

Let

³The excellent bishop Bull before mentioned, all whose works are highly to be valued, and should be in the hands of every clergyman, has two discourses upon the state of man after death. The former attempts to prove, that "the soul of man subsists after death in a place of abode provided by God for it till the resurrection;" and the latter is "concerning the middle state of happiness or misery allotted by God to every man presently after death, according as he has been good or bad in his past life."—Dr. Jortin has also a good sermon upon "the intermediate state between death and the resurrection." It is the 19th in the second volume. He there observes, that "the subsistence of the soul after the death of the body appears to be the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles delivered in the New Testament. To this it should be added," continues he, "that the Fathers of the church, who lived in or near the times of the Apostles, were unanimous in this opinion, and persuaded that the soul of every man, upon the dissolution of the body, died not, but had a proper place to go to."

—"The same opinion was also, by a tradition from the remotest antiquity, adopted by all the civilized Heathen nations in Greece, and in the East; and indeed in those parts of the world which have been more lately discovered, in the vast regions of America."

The above bishop Bull likewise, speaking of the opinions of the Christian Fathers concerning the state of human souls after death, says, "I do affirm the consentient and constant doctrine of the primitive church to be this—That the souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of this world, though short of that most consummate, perfect beatitude of the kingdom of heaven, with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection. And so on the contrary, that the souls of all the wicked are presently after death in a state of very great misery; and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgment." Vol. 1. p. 102. The celebrated Dr. Clarke is of the same opinion: "In the intermediate separate state," says this great man, "between death and judgment, when the vanities of this deceitful world shall be at an end, and the delusions and false colours here put upon things shall all entirely disappear; the natural effects and impressions made by virtuous and vicious habits upon the minds of men, will be still more lively and sensible. Besides; in that

Let not unthinking men, therefore, who are enslaved by their passions, take refuge in this groundless persuasion, that when they die they shall be no more; that they shall never be called to any account; but shall sleep sweetly in the dust through everlasting ages, or at least for many thousands of years till the resurrection, which, they fondly hope, may never happen. For let them be assured there is a retribution day at no great distance, when the Judge of all the earth will call us to a strict account for every thing done here below. Let them read the foregoing relations of supernatural interpositions with attention; let them examine the holy scriptures with seriousness and impartiality; let them consult their own minds and consciences; and then let them soberly, and in the fear of God declare, whether they have no uneasy apprehensions concerning the consequence of their present irreligious conduct. *Surely*

there is a God that judgeth the earth, and taketh notice

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of

state, the righteous cannot but be very happy, through the certain expectation of that *coron of righteousness, which they know the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them at that day*; and the wicked, on the contrary, cannot but be made very miserable, by a certain *fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation*, though the irreversible sentence shall not be actually executed upon them before the great day."

Tillotson has two good discourses on this subject, namely, the 24th and 184th, which should be well considered by those persons who have any doubts upon their minds concerning the future destination of human spirits.

See also the second of Dr. Bentley's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture on the immortality of the soul, where all the sophistry of materialism is refuted with great learning and ability.

* Sermons, vol. 7. p. 263.

of the behaviour of men. And all our infidelity, and inattention to the calls of virtue and religion, all our drollery and wanton profaneness upon the awful interpositions of heaven, may entertain, for a season, our deluded companions in vice and folly, but assuredly they will be sharp arrows and hot burning coals in our spirits on a dying pillow, and the day of final retribution.* Nothing upon earth can prevent

*We have a remarkable instance of a gentleman of this description, and in this situation, recorded in the 81st paper of the *Guardian*. Would men of similar characters attend to it in time, it might be of all conceivable advantage to them:—

“ Oh, almighty Being! how shall I look up towards thee, when I
 “ reflect that I am of no consideration but as I have offended? My
 “ existence, O my God, without thy mercy, is not to be prolonged
 “ in this or another world but for my punishment. I apprehend;
 “ oh my Maker, let it not be too late; I apprehend, and tremble
 “ at thy presence. And shall I not consider thee, who art all goodness,
 “ but with terror? Oh! my Redeemer, do thou behold my
 “ anguish. Turn to me, thou Saviour of the world; who has offended
 “ like me! Oh, my God, I cannot fly out of thy presence;
 “ let me fall down in it: I humble myself in contrition of heart.
 “ But, alas! I have not only swerved from thee, but have laboured
 “ against thee. If thou dost pardon what I have committed, how
 “ wilt thou pardon what I have made others commit? I have rejoiced
 “ in ill, as in a prosperity. Forgive, oh my God, all who
 “ have offended by my persuasion, all who have transgressed by my
 “ example. Canst thou, O God, accept of the confession of old
 “ age, to expiate all the labour and industry of youth spent in transgressions
 “ against thee! While I am still alive, let me implore
 “ thee to recall to thy grace all whom I have made to sin. Let, oh
 “ Lord, thy goodness admit of his prayer for their pardon, by
 “ whose instigation they have transgressed. Accept, O God, of
 “ this interval of age between my sinful days and the hour of my
 “ dissolution, to wear away the corrupt habits in my soul, and prepare
 “ myself for the mansions of purity and joy. Impute not to
 “ me, oh my God, the offences I may give, after my death, to
 “ those I leave behind me; let me not transgress when I am no
 “ more seen: but prevent the ill effects of my ill-applied studies,
 “ and receive me into thy mercy.”

‘ It is the most melancholy circumstance that can be imagined to
 ‘ be on a death bed, and with all that a man has most laboured to

went the most fatal consequences taking place, but a speedy returning from the error of our ways unto the service of the living and true God. A door of hope is set open, even for the profligate and abandoned sinner; and nothing can by any means shut it, but our own obstinate and perverse unbelief. The Son of God hath died an atoning death, and removed every impediment out of the way of our salvation. Only let us repent, believe, and obey the gospel, and whatever our past conduct may have been, we shall live forever. *There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician there.* The blood of Christ is of

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sovereign

‘bring to pass, were obliterated for ever. How emphatically worse
‘is this, than having passed all ones days in idleness? Yet this is the
‘frequent case of many men of refined talents. It is, methinks,
‘monstrous, that the love of fame, and value of the fashion of the
‘world, can transport a man so far, as even in solitude to act with so
‘little reflection upon his real interest. This is premeditated mad-
‘ness; for it is an error done with the assistance of all the faculties of
‘the mind.

‘When every circumstance about us is a constant admonition,
‘how transient is every labour of man, it should, methinks, be no
‘hard matter to bring one’s self to consider the emptiness of all our
‘endeavours. But I was not a little charmed the other day, when
‘sitting with an old friend, and communing together on such subjects,
‘he expressed himself after this manner:—

“It is unworthy a Christian philosopher, to let any thing here be-
“low stand in the least competition with his duty. In vain is reason
“fortified by faith, if it produces in our practice no greater effects
“than what reason wrought in mere man.

“I condemn, (in dependence on the support of Heaven I speak
“it) I condemn all which the generality of mankind call great and
“glorious. I will no longer think or act like a mortal; but con-
“sider myself as a being that commenced at my birth, and is to
“endure to all eternity. The accident of death will not end, but
“improve my being. I will think of myself, and provide for my-
“self, as an immortal; and I will do nothing now which I do not
“believe I shall approve a thousand years hence.”

sovereign virtue, and no man ever sincerely believed in him and was confounded. "Millions of souls in "glory now" were once entangled as we are, tied and bound with the chains of their sins, as we many of us still continue to be, who yet by virtue of that blood, and the efficacy of God's Spirit, found both the guilt and power of sin removed. Why then, why shall not we be free? Why shall we live as though we should never die? Are we happy in our present folly? And do we feel confidence that all shall end as we could wish in the moment of nature's extremity? Have we not immortal spirits within us, which

The letter written from the younger Villiers Duke of Buckingham upon his death-bed, to the profoundly learned Dr. Barrow, contains a very important and highly useful lesson to us all, and is more especially applicable to the gay and thoughtless young people of the age. It is as follows:

"Dear Doctor,

"I always looked upon you as a man of true virtue; and know you to be a person of sound judgment. For, however I may act in opposition to the principles of religion, or the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you, I had always the highest veneration for both. The world and I may shake hands; for, I dare affirm, we are heartily weary of each other. O Doctor, what a prodigal have I been of the most valuable of all possessions, time! I have squandered it away, with a persuasion it was lasting; and now, when a few days would be worth a hecatomb of worlds; I cannot flatter myself with a prospect of half a dozen hours.

"How despicable is that man, who never prays to his God, but in the time of his distress! In what manner can he supplicate that omnipotent Being in his affliction, with reverence, whom, in the tide of his prosperity, he never remembered with dread? Do not brand me with infidelity, when I tell you I am almost ashamed to offer up my petitions to the throne of grace; or of imploring that divine mercy in the next world, which I have so scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked on as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God? Shall an insult offered to the king be looked on in the most offensive light; and

which pant for something higher and better than we ever yet possessed? If we have, let us listen to the invitation of the Evangelical prophet. He will tell us where the longings of our souls may be satisfied

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“ yet no notice taken when the King of kings is treated with indignity and disrespect?

“ The companions of my former libertinism would scarce believe their eyes, were you to shew them this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity. They are more entitled to my pity than my resentment. A future state may very well strike terror into any man, who has not acted well in his life; and he must have an uncommon share of courage indeed, who does not shrink at the presence of his God.

“ You see, my dear Doctor, the apprehensions of death will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of their understanding. I am haunted by remorse, despised by my acquaintance, and, I fear, forsaken by my God. There is nothing so dangerous, my dear Doctor, as extraordinary abilities. I cannot be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was one possessed of uncommon qualifications; as I sincerely regret that I was ever blest with any at all. My rank in life still made these accomplishments more conspicuous; and, fascinated with the general applause which they procured, I never considered about the proper means, by which they should be displayed. Hence, to purchase a smile from a blockhead, whom I despised, I have frequently treated the virtuous with disrespect; and sported with the holy name of Heaven, to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools, who were entitled to nothing but my contempt.

“ Your men of wit, my dear Doctor, look on themselves as discharged from the duties of religion; and confine the doctrine of the gospel to people of meaner understandings: and look on that man to be of a narrow genius, who studies to be good. What a pity, that the holy writings are not made the criterion of true judgment! Favour me, my dear Doctor, with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease. I am of opinion this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you. My distemper is powerful. Come and pray for the departing spirit of the unhappy

BUCKINGHAM.”

Arminian Mag. vol. 13. p. 433.—Let the Reader consult the account of the Honourable Francis Newport's last moments, in the first vol. of *Sacred Literature*, p. 141, which is one of the most affecting narratives recorded in any language.

ed: *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*⁶ In this remarkable passage God calls us to turn from the vanities of the world, to believe in his Son, and to imbibe the Spirit's cheering influence. Let us hearken unto him, then, and our souls shall live. We shall flourish and blossom like the rose in all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. The peace of our minds shall even now be such as we never did or could enjoy, in pursuing the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. Enjoyments of this nature leave an aching void within, which never can be filled, till the pure and refined pleasures of religion are experienced in the bosom. "The soul's calm sun shine
 "and the heart-felt joy;" *the peace of God which passeth all understanding*; "the tears that speak, and
 "the sighs that waft the soul to heaven," are all the present effects and rewards of genuine religion. These we all may have, in a greater or less degree,
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⁶Is. 55. 1—3.

whenever we turn unto God by penitence and prayer. And as we continue to tread the paths of virtue, and advance to greater lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights of holiness and devotedness to the God of our salvation, *our peace shall flow as a river, and our righteousness abound as the waves of the sea.* In waiting upon the Lord from time to time we shall renew our strength, we shall mount up with wings as eagles; we shall run and not be weary, and we shall walk and not faint. We shall delight ourselves in the Lord, and he will cause us to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed us with the heritage of Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

But if, on the contrary, we turn a deaf ear to all the calls and admonitions of God and conscience, of virtue and religion: if we are resolved to take our swing of sensual pleasures, and not to withhold our heart from any wanton joy: if we determine to turn our backs on God, and our faces towards the silly vanities of the world, which never did, neither ever can yield us solid satisfaction; then let us listen to what the Lord God will say concerning us, and tremble for our own safety: *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.—Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. Yea, all the curses which are written in the book of*
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the law of God shall come upon thee and overtake thee. *Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. For the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume, into smোক shall they consume away.—I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*

All this is true, with respect to the bodies, families, and worldly circumstances of ungodly men. With respect to their future condition we can be at no loss to determine. It is engraven as with the point of a diamond, in various parts of that book, which was long since written, by holy men under divine influence, for our instruction. I will recite only one passage:—*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.* Not to know God, and not to obey the gospel of his Son, is to be exposed to all the horrors of the divine indignation.

And as all the denunciations of heaven will have a most assured accomplishment upon the proper objects

72 Thef. 1. 7—10. See also Mat. 7. 13. 14. Mark 9. 43—48, and many others,

jects of them, we may be equally assured the promises of God to the pious and virtuous, the religious and moral, shall not fail of their design. For as is the majesty of the Divine Being, so is his mercy. *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Yea, as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far will he remove our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.* You that are religious characters need not be afraid, therefore, lest God should deal hardly by you, or lest you should be forgotten and neglected among the infinity of beings, which he hath continually under his care. Neither need you to fear lest your disembodied spirit^s should
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“ If we consider the dignity of an intelligent Being, and put that in the scales against brute inanimate matter, we may affirm, without over-valuing human nature, that the soul of one virtuous and religious man is of greater worth and excellency than the sun and his planets, and all the stars in the world.”—If this is the case, good men need not be afraid lest the Divine Being should desert and neglect them in the moment of nature's greatest need.

See Dr. Bentley's Sermons at Boyle's Lecture, p. 259.

lose its way amidst the immensity of his works. He will give his angels charge over you, and they shall conduct you safe into the place appointed for you. "Make you his service your delight, he'll make your wants his care." He may not indeed favour you with any of those monitory dreams and nocturnal visions, of which we have been discoursing. Nor is it needful he should. These are the privileges of few, and make no essential part of any man's happiness, though they may answer very important ends in the Divine administration.⁹ But—which is of much greater consequence—of this you may be assured, he will order the whole course of his providence in such a manner, that you shall be made the most compleatly happy you are capable of being. And, ere long, your eliminated soul shall expatiate on all the wonders of his works, the rectitude of his government, and the glories of his nature and perfections through everlasting ages. Blessed shall you be while you live, and eternally blessed when

⁹Nothing can be more vague and delusive than the common dreams, of which most men are more or less sensible; and it argues a weak and superstitious mind to pay any serious regard to them. We should, however, at the same time be cautious, lest we deviate into the contrary extreme, and treat the *real* interpositions of heaven as the delusions of a disordered imagination. To avoid the imputation of superstition we must not recur to infidelity and scepticism. Better believe too much than too little. A good general rule in this case may be the following:—Any admonition in our sleep, by an attention to which we should do some good, escape some evil, and sustain no injury; or by an attention to which we shall in any measure become wiser and better, may safely be attended to. To treat all others with a steady disregard will be for our comfort and satisfaction, and display our good sense and strength of understanding.

when you die. *Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.* Yea, all the blessings which are written in the book of the law of God shall come upon thee and overtake thee. And when nature's period shall arrive, and you shall turn your face to the wall, and bid adieu to men and things below, the eyes of your spirit shall open upon the eternal world, and you shall come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. Having been delivered out of great tribulation, and washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, you shall be before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among you. You shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall heat or cold annoy you. But the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. Happy shall you be that ever you were born. The end of your creation shall be answered. And rap-
turous

turous hymns and songs of praise shall ascend from your glorified spirit through everlasting ages. Then shall you be made fully acquainted with the secrets of the invisible world. The nature of angels¹⁰ and spirits, and all the reasons of their secret agency, which at present causes such terror and amazement to poor mortals, will be developed to your full satisfaction

¹⁰See two valuable discourses on "the Nature and Employment of good Angels," in bishop Conybeare's Sermons, vol. 2, p. 267. &c.—I have been pleased with the view which bishop Burnet gives us of invisible beings:—"We perceive", says this able writer, "that we ourselves, and the rest of mankind, have thinking principles within us; so from thence it is easy enough for us to apprehend, that there may be other thinking beings, which either have no bodies at all, but act purely as intellectual substances; or if they have bodies, that they are so subtilised as to be capable of a vast quickness of motion, such in proportion as we perceive to be in our animal spirits, which in the minute that our minds command them, are raising motions in the remotest parts of our bodies. Such bodies may also be so thin as to be invisible to us; and as among men some are good and some bad, and of the bad some seem to be determinedly, and as to all appearance, incurably bad; so there may have been a time and state of liberty, in which those spirits were left to their choice, whether they would continue in their innocency, or fall from it; and such as continued, might be forever fixed in that state, or exalted to higher degrees in it: And such as fell from it, might fall irrecoverably into a state of utter apostacy from God, and of rebellion against him. There is nothing in this theory that is incredible. Therefore if the scriptures have told us any thing concerning it, we have no reason to be prejudiced against them upon that account. Besides that, there are innumerable histories in many several countries and ages of the world, of extraordinary apparitions,* and other unaccountable performances that could only have been done by invisible powers. Many of these are so well attested, that it argues a strange pitch of obstinacy, to refuse to believe a matter of fact when it is well vouched, and when there is nothing in reason to oppose it, but an unwillingness to believe invisible beings. It is true, this is an argument in which a fabulous humour will go far, and in which some are so credulous as to swal-

* See the apparition of Sichæus, Virgil's *Æneid*, b. 1. l. 253—359.
See also Burnet's *Life of Rochester*, p. 16—20.

faction. In the mean time, be patient; enquire not too curiously into the mysteries of the unseen world, but do what God hath commanded you, and *quit yourselves like men; be strong, yea, be strong.* See that you *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.* Practice rather than profess. Say little, do much. If you enjoy faith in Christ, *add to that faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.* Strive to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Lay yourselves out to the utmost of your abilities, your time, your fortune, and your influence, to promote the glory of God and the general welfare of mankind. At the same time be not wanting to yourselves. Keep under your own bodies, and bring them into subjection; lest that by any means, while you are labouring to do good to others, ye yourselves should become castaways.¹² To perish as a common sinner is dreadful

“low down every thing: Therefore all wise men ought to suspend their belief, and not to go too fast; but when things are so undeniably attested, that there is no reason to question the exactness or the credit of the witnesses, it argues a mind unreasonably prepossessed to reject all such evidence.”

Exposition of the 39 Articles, p. 43.

¹²I have often been affected with the final scene of the excellent Grotius. To one that admired his great industry he said, “Ah! I have wasted my life in a laborious doing of nothing.”—And to another, “I would give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of Jean Urick.” This Jean Urick was a religious poor man, who spent eight hours of his time in prayer, eight in labour, and but eight in meals, sleep and other necessities. Though

ful: but to perish as a professor of the pure and holy religion of Christ is much more dreadful.¹³ Profess therefore what you please; but be what you profess. Sincerity is the soul of religion. The greatest abilities without it, are in the sight of God of little estimation: the meanest talents with it, are a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto him, when offered on the altar of the cross. Let no one therefore deceive himself: *God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Grotius was a great and good man he seems to have been uncomfortable in his mind, and to have lived beneath the privileges of the gospel dispensation. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* And those who serve God with true freedom of mind and in the genuine spirit of the gospel, abound in joy through the power of the Holy Ghost: the fruit of the Spirit being love, peace, joy, and every other affection of the mind, which can constitute a human being holy and happy here, and prepare him for glory and immortality hereafter. Such happy beings do not so much suffer the stroke of death, as they triumph over it. While to others, whose minds are clouded with guilt, and the sense of an absent God, he is the king of terrors; to them who walk in the true liberty of the gospel, and feel the joys of pardoned sin, he is a messenger of peace. And the language of their quivering lips is—*O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!*

¹³See Mat. 11, 20—25.

The End.

STRICTURES

ON THE

VARIOUS OPINIONS OF MEN

IN

Religious Matters,

AND THE BEST

HUMAN MEANS

OF

ASCERTAINING THE ORIGINAL DOCTRINES OF
CHRISTIANITY.

By the Rev^d. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to
the saints. JUDE.

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M, DCC, XCII.

Preface.

THE following *Strictures* are written with a design of shewing the necessity of some certain method of ascertaining the true sense of holy scripture, on points disputed between the several denominations of Christians; of enquiring whether any such method is discoverable; and, if discoverable, what that method is. It is well known very wide and important differences of opinion do prevail, even among good men. If, therefore, some common mode of interpretation could be recommended, in which the serious and candid of all parties might safely and honourably acquiesce, it would be rendering an essential service to the cause of religion, and bringing us much nearer to one another than we now are, in points where we have long been accustomed to differ, to the no small injury of our common Christianity.

Should any misrepresentation of facts, opinions, or characters, be detected in the course of these *Strictures*, the Reader may be assured, such misrepresentation is without the smallest intention. If I have appeared to bear hard upon some celebrated names, it is what they themselves have done with others, and therefore they can have no just right to complain. We have none of us, I trust, any other design but the vindication of what we conceive to be important

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truth.

truth. We all respect, no doubt, the persons of men, while we oppose their real or imaginary mistakes; and can say with sincerity—*Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; sed magis amicus Veritas.*

There is, I am well aware, a general prejudice gone abroad against controversial writings, and especially upon theological subjects; though for what justifiable reason I see not. Controversy in itself is only the discussion of some particular opinion, or opinions, by two or more persons, either in conversation or writing. One takes one side of the question, another the opposite; and each advances whatever he conceives makes most for the establishment of his own sentiments. If the opinions in debate are canvassed with moderation and good manners, I cannot conceive, that any material injury should arise to the cause of truth: For truth is of such a nature, that the more it is tried, the brighter it shines, and the faster it makes its way into the esteem of men. There are some topics indeed, which are too deep and too sacred to be bandied about in the common stile of polemical investigation, and one cannot, perhaps, take the inimical side of the controversy without incurring the charge of guilt and profaneness. Thus, it should seem, that no man can seriously maintain a controversy against the Being and Perfections of God, and continue innocent; much less for diversion and entertainment. So no man, as it appears to me, can attempt to subvert the truth of holy scripture, to invalidate its force upon the human mind,

mind, to oppose the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the personal existence of the Holy Ghost, without incurring the displeasure of Almighty God. In like manner, the atonement, made for sin by the death of Christ, appears to be of that magnitude in the æconomy of man's redemption, that I do not see how any one can reject it, with the bible in his hand, and yet obtain favour with heaven. I know this will be considered as uncharitable and illiberal. But I cannot help it. True liberality of sentiment does not require that we should sacrifice the faith once delivered to the saints, to gratify the humours of men. And it appears to me, after much serious consideration upon the subject, there can be no salvation for any human Being without it; and whosoever rejects it sins against the only remedy of God's providing, for restoring, in a way consistent with his own honour, the degenerate sons of Adam. Whether God could have contrived any other way of recovery, equally honourable for himself, and equally safe for man, becomes not us, perhaps, to say. But that he has not contrived any other, and that he will not accept of any other, is abundantly manifest from various parts of the sacred writings. If, therefore, any of our fellow Christians, induced by whatever motives, should be bold enough to attack any or all of these great, leading principles of divine revelation: if Hammon controverts the existence of God, Voltaire the truth of revelation, Lindsey the divinity of Christ and Holy Spirit, Priestley the inspiration of scripture, the miraculous conception, the conclusiveness of St. Paul's reasoning,

reasoning, and the atonement made by the death of Christ for the sins of the world, I cannot help thinking they all incur a great degree of guilt; and that, however sensible, wise, learned, and moral they may be in other respects, in this they labour under a very culpable infatuation of mind. And if any, or all of these gentlemen are hardy enough to draw their pens against these momentous truths of Christianity, it will be the duty of every one, who has it in his power, to defend them in the best manner he is able. I do not say Christianity is at stake, neither that the existence of these great verities of the gospel is at stake; for God will defend his own cause, and all the policy of earth and hell shall not prevail against the truths of his word; much less against the existence of the church itself. But though we need entertain no fears for the truths of the gospel, we ought to have serious apprehensions for our own safety, if we desert the post of duty, and neglect to use our best endeavours to prevent the diffusion of destructive error, and to promote the interests of pure and undefiled religion in the world. In such a case, it is not choice, but dire necessity, which constrains the faithful servants of Christ to step forward in vindication of his personal honour, and what he hath done to redeem our fallen race. We should, however, at all times, but especially when we attempt to defend so sacred and important a cause, take good heed, that our spirit be Christian, as well as our arguments conclusive. If we maintain the former, and fail in the latter, it is a proof that our heart

heart is better than our head; and though we suffer an overthrow by our adversary, we shall receive an Euge from our Great Master. But if we should fail in the former, and yet succeed in the latter, we shall receive only the poor eclat from our fellow creatures, of being the more able disputants, while the court of heaven, that unerring tribunal of all real excellency, passes a sentence of reprobation upon our misguided endeavours to maintain its cause. Both the matter and manner of all our religious discussions ought, therefore, to be carefully attended to. And if we fail, in either, let it be rather in our logic, than the manner and spirit with which we conduct our polemical ratiocinations.



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STRICTURES, &c.

SECTION I,

TO a serious and well-disposed mind, there are few things so truly perplexing, as the various and contradictory opinions of men, upon religious subjects; especially where the object of worship, and the foundation of our future hopes are concerned. For, notwithstanding all the light derived from divine revelation, these latter ages have been as productive of literary and religious monsters, as the most extravagant of those that preceded them. It cannot be denied, nor indeed is it matter of much surprize, that the times prior to the gospel of Christ, abounded with opinions the most contradictory and absurd. A degree of extravagance equally distressing invaded the Christian church also, soon after the death of its Founder, and has come down to our own times with unabated vigour. It would be an amusing, and not unprofitable employment, to trace these eccentricities through
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the several periods of the church, and hold them up as a picture to the present age, to guard them against the licentiousness of religious opinions. But, if a subject like this were pursued in all its extent, through every century, the treatise would swell to an enormous size, and defeat its own intention. We will, therefore, confine our inquiry within a narrower compass, and select such circumstances only in the history of religion, as are calculated to illustrate and exemplify our present design.

The times since the reformation from Popery, have been not less fruitful than those which preceded that event.

'The Roman Catholics frequently make the sects, parties, and absurd opinions which prevail among Protestants, an objection to the Reformation itself. This is not candid. We should do each other justice. There might be some shew of reason in this, if they themselves were perfectly unanimous in their religious sentiments. But it is well known this is far from being the case. More enthusiastic opinions and practices never prevailed among any body of people whatever. Ample instances might be produced. I shall only select, at present, the following instances of enthusiasm in conduct, practised by some of the most devout members of that communion:—"Some of the Mystics," says a living Author, "of the
 " fifth century not only lived among the wild beasts, but also after
 " their manner. They ran naked through the desert with a furious
 " aspect. They fed on grass and wild herbs, avoided the sight and
 " conversation of men, remained motionless in certain places for
 " several years, exposed to the rigour and inclemency of the seasons;
 " and towards the conclusion of their lives, shut themselves
 " up in narrow and miserable huts. All this was considered as
 " true piety, the only method of rendering the Deity propitious to
 " them, and by this means they attracted the highest veneration
 " of the deluded multitude. One Simeon, a Syrian, in order perhaps
 " to climb as near to heaven as he could, passed thirty-seven
 " years of his wretched life upon five pillars, of six, twelve, twenty-two,
 " thirty-six, and lastly forty cubits high. This practice
 " continued in the East till the twelfth century.

event. Yea, it is well known by those who are at all acquainted with ecclesiastical affairs, that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were as productive of religious excesses as any other period since the birth of our Saviour. In the former of these ages appeared all the absurdities of the Anabaptists in Germany. These fanatics were headed by John Boccold and

“ The persons most distinguished in ecclesiastical history for their
 “ bodily austerities and religious exercises, were Dominic, and Peter
 “ ter Damiani, his spiritual guide. This Dominic for many years
 “ had next to his skin an iron coat of mail, which he never put off
 “ but for the sake of flagellation. He seldom passed a day without
 “ chanting two psalters, at the same time whipping himself with
 “ both his hands; and yet this was his time of greatest relaxation.
 “ For in Lent, and while he was performing penance for other
 “ persons, he would repeat at least three psalters a day, whipping
 “ himself at the same time. He would often repeat two psalters
 “ without any interval between them, without even sitting down,
 “ or ceasing for one moment to whip himself.

“ Peter Damiani asking him one day if he could kneel with his
 “ coat of mail; he said, When I am well I make a hundred genu-
 “ flexions every fifteenth psalm, which is a thousand in the whole
 “ psalter; and one time he told his master, that he had gone
 “ through the psalter eight times in one day and night; and at
 “ another time, trying his utmost, he repeated it twelve times, and
 “ as far as the psalm which begins with *Beati Quorum* of the thir-
 “ teenth. And in repeating the psalter he did not stop
 “ at the hundred and fifty psalms, but added to them the canticles,
 “ the hymns, the creed of St. Athanasius, and the litanies, which
 “ are to be found at the end of the old psalters. His fasting and
 “ his coat of mail made his skin as black as a negroe; and besides
 “ this he wore four iron rings, two on his thighs, and two on his
 “ legs, to which he afterwards added four others; and besides this
 “ iron shirt he had another under him to sleep upon. Notwith-
 “ standing these severities, he died very old on the 14th of Octo-
 “ ber, 1062, which day is dedicated to his honour in the calendar
 “ of the church of Rome.” The austerities of Peter Damiani
 were similar to these, and an account of them may be seen in Fleury,
 vol. 13. p. 205, &c. See Priestley's *Corruptions of Christianity*,
 vol. 2. p. 209, &c.

and John Matthias, the former a taylor, and the latter a baker; who having great resolution, and the appearance of much sanctity, with a plausible and confident manner of talking, soon gained many converts. They strongly maintained, that the office of magistracy was an encroachment on spiritual liberty; that all the distinctions occasioned by birth, rank, or wealth, should be abolished; and that all Christians, throwing their possessions into one common stock, should live in that state of equality which became members of the same family.

Among the converts of these men were Rothman, a Lutheran, who first preached the Protestant doctrine at Munster; and Cnipperdoling, a citizen of good birth and considerable eminence. Emboldened by the countenance of such disciples they openly taught their opinions; and not satisfied with that liberty, they made several attempts, though without success, to seize the town, in order to get their tenets established by public authority. At last, having secretly called in their associates from the neighbouring country, they suddenly took possession of the arsenal and senate-house in the night-time, and running through the streets with drawn swords, and horrible howlings, cried out alternately, "Repent, and be baptized," and "Depart, ye ungodly." This was in February, 1534. The senators, the canons, the nobility, together with the more sober citizens, whether Papists or Protestants, terrified

terrified at their threats and outcries, fled in confusion, and left the city under the dominion of a frantic multitude, consisting chiefly of strangers. Nothing now remaining to overawe or controul them, they set about modelling the government according to their own extravagant ideas; and though at first they shewed so much respect for the ancient constitution, as to elect senators of their own sect, and to appoint Cnipperdoling and another profelyte consuls, this was nothing more than form; for all their proceedings were directed by Matthias, who, in the style, and with the authority of a Prophet, uttered his commands, which it was instant death to disobey. Having begun with encouraging the multitude to pillage the churches, and deface their ornaments; he enjoined them to destroy all books except the Bible, as useless and impious; he appointed the estates of such as fled, to be confiscated, and sold to the inhabitants of the neighbouring country; he ordered every man to bring forth his gold, silver, and precious effects, and to lay them at his feet: the wealth amassed by these means, he deposited in a public treasury, and named deacons to dispense it for the common use of all. The members of his commonwealth being thus brought to a perfect equality, he commanded all of them to eat at tables prepared in public, and even prescribed the dishes which were to be served up each day. Having finished his plan of reformation, his next
care

care was to provide for the defence of the city; and he took measures for that purpose with a prudence which favoured nothing of fanaticism. He collected vast magazines of every kind; he repaired and extended the fortifications, obliging every person without distinction to work in his turn; he formed such as were capable of bearing arms into regular bodies, and endeavoured to add the vigour of discipline to the impetuosity of enthusiasm. He sent emissaries to the Anabaptists in the Low-Countries, inviting them to assemble at Munster, which he dignified with the name of Mount-Sion, that from thence they might set out to reduce all the nations of the earth under their dominion. He himself was unwearied in attending to every thing necessary for the security or increase of the sect; animating his disciples by his own example to refuse no labour, as well as to repine at no hardship; and their enthusiastic passions being kept from subsiding by a perpetual succession of exhortations, revelations, and prophecies, they seemed ready to undertake or to suffer any thing in maintenance of their opinions.

While they were thus employed, the bishop of Munster having assembled a considerable army, advanced to besiege the town. On his approach, Matthias sallied out at the head of some chosen troops, attacked one quarter of his camp, forced it, and after great slaughter, returned to the city loaded

ed with glory and spoil. Intoxicated with this success, he appeared next day brandishing a spear, and declared, that, in imitation of Gideon, he would go forth with a handful of men and smite the host of the ungodly. In the month of May, thirty persons, whom he named, followed him without hesitation in this wild enterprize, and, rushing on the enemy with a frantic courage, were cut off to a man. The death of their Prophet occasioned at first great consternation among his disciples; but Boccold, by the same gifts and pretensions which had gained Matthias credit, soon revived their spirits and hopes to such a degree, that he succeeded him in the same absolute direction of all their affairs. And though less daring in action than Matthias, he was a wilder enthusiast, and of more unbounded ambition. Soon after the death of his predecessor, having, by obscure visions and prophecies, prepared the multitude for some extraordinary event, he stripped himself naked, and marching through the streets, proclaimed with a loud voice, "That the kingdom of Sion was at hand; that whatever was highest on earth should be brought low, and whatever was lowest should be exalted." In order to fulfil this, he commanded the churches, as the most lofty buildings in the city, to be levelled with the ground; he degraded the senators chosen by Matthias, and depriving Cnipperdoling of the consulship, the highest office in the commonwealth, he appointed him to execute

execute the lowest and most infamous, that of common hangman, to which strange transition the other agreed, not only without murmuring, but with the utmost joy; and such was the despotic rigour of Boccold's administration, that he was called almost every day to perform some duty or other of his wretched function. In place of the deposed senators, he named twelve judges, according to the number of tribes in Israel, to preside in all affairs; retaining to himself the same authority which Moses anciently possessed as legislator of that people.

Not satisfied, however, with power or titles which were not supreme, a prophet, whom he had gained and tutored, having called the multitude together, declared it to be the will of God, that John Boccold should be King of Sion, and sit on the throne of David. John, kneeling down, accepted of the heavenly call, which he solemnly protested had been revealed likewise to himself, and was immediately acknowledged as Monarch by the deluded multitude. From that moment he assumed all the state and pomp of royalty. He wore a crown of gold, and was clad in the richest and most sumptuous garments. A Bible was carried on his one hand, a naked sword on the other. A great body of guards accompanied him when he appeared in public. He coined money stamped with his own image, and appointed the great officers of his household and kingdom, among whom Chipperdoling was nominated
governour

governour of the city, as a reward for his former submission. All this happened in the month of June.

Having now attained the height of power, Boccold began to discover passions, which he had hitherto restrained or indulged only in secret. The minds of his deluded subjects being prepared by his prophets and teachers, he set them an example of using what he called their Christian liberty; he married three wives at once, among which the widow of Matthias, a woman of singular beauty, was one. He proceeded in the same course, as circumstances arose, till the number of his wives amounted to fourteen, though the widow of Matthias was the only one dignified with the title of Queen. After the example of their prophet, the multitude gave themselves up to the most licentious and uncontrouled gratification of their desires. No man remained satisfied with a single wife. Not to use their Christian liberty, was deemed a crime. Persons were appointed to search the houses for young women grown up to maturity, whom they instantly compelled to marry; and every kind of excess abounded among them, of which the passions of men are capable.

Meanwhile, the bishop of Munster, aided by the German princes, blockaded the town. And, notwithstanding all their precaution, famine began to appear. All their aids were cut off. The faith of

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some gave way. But whenever they expressed their fears they were punished with immediate death. One of the King's wives, having uttered certain words, which implied some doubt concerning his divine mission, he instantly called the whole number together, and commanding the blasphemer, as he called her, to kneel down, he cut off her head with his own hands; and so far were the rest from expressing any horror at this cruel deed, that they joined him in dancing with a frantic joy around the bleeding body of their companion.

By the first of June, 1535, the besieged endured the utmost rigour of famine; but they chose rather to suffer hardships, the recital of which is shocking to humanity, than to listen to the terms of capitulation offered them by the bishop. On the twenty-fourth of the same month, however, the city was taken by means of a deserter; most of the inhabitants slain, and the remainder taken prisoners. Among the last were the King and Cnipperdoling. The King loaded with chains, was carried from city to city as a spectacle to gratify the curiosity of the people, and was exposed to all their insults. His spirit, however, was not broken or humbled by this sad reverse of his condition; and he adhered with unshaken firmness to the distinguishing tenets of his sect. After this he was brought back to Munster, the scene of his royalty and crimes, and put to death with the most exquisite as well as lingering tortures,

tortures, all which he bore with astonishing fortitude. This extraordinary man, who had been able to acquire such amazing dominion over the minds of his followers, and to excite commotions so dangerous to society, was only twenty-six years of age.*

SECTION II.

DURING the civil wars here in England, about the middle of the last century, the Puritans carried all before them. New religions sprang up like mushrooms. Among others there was a set of great pretenders to superior sanctity called Fifth-Monarchy-Men. Both church and state had been subverted some years before. But about the return of King Charles the Second these enthusiastic gentry got it into their heads, that the time was come for Christ to begin his reign of a thousand years upon earth. They even fixed the time for setting the crown upon his head. Of this the following is a remarkable instance:—In 1660, and on the very day on which Charles was crowned, a considerable number of these madmen met in Coleman-street in London, where they were headed by one Venner, a fiery ignorant preacher. In the morning he delivered a discourse to them, in

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which

*This extract of the story of the German Anabaptists is made from Robertson's History of Charles the Fifth, which the Reader would do well to peruse at large. A farther account may be seen in Sleiden's History of the Reformation in Germany, and in Jortin's Life of Erasmus.

which he told them, that the day was come when Christ was to ascend his throne. Having fired their imaginations with the highest raptures of enthusiasm, and finding them ready to obey him in every thing, he ordered them to sally forth into the streets, and kill every person who refused to join with them.

This was readily complied with, and these infatuated men made a most dreadful havock in the streets. The guards were brought to disperse them, and several of them were killed. A considerable number were taken into custody, among whom was Venner, the ringleader, who with nine of his deluded followers, were executed in different parts of the city.—This was a dreadful stroke to the Fifth-Monarchy-Men, and from that time they have made no great figure in England.*

It was likewise in the former of these eventful centuries that Vanini[†] figured away as an Atheist, and young Servin[‡] in the latter. They were both most

[†]Hurd's View of all Religions, p. 674.

[‡]This poor wretch was born in Italy, 1585, and became a man of considerable learning. He took great pains in making converts to his own atheistical opinions, and died a martyr to them in 1619, at Toulouse in France.

[§]This young man was a very extraordinary character. He was born and died in France. The following account which is given of him by the celebrated Sully in his Memoirs of Henry 4th, is worthy of perusal:—"The beginning of June 1623, I set out for Calais where I was to embark, having with me a retinue of upwards of 200 gentlemen, or who called themselves such, of whom a considerable number were really of the first distinction. Just before my departure old Servin came and presented his son to me, and begged I would use my endeavours to make him a man

most extraordinary instances of atheistic bravery. For them, however, one might make some apology (if this foul crime admits of any) because they lived

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“ of some worth and honesty; but he confessed it was what he dared not hope, not through any want of understanding or capacity in the young man, but from his natural inclination to all kinds of vice. The old man was in the right. What he told me having excited my curiosity to gain a thorough knowledge of young Servin, I found him to be at once both a wonder and a monster; for I can give no other idea of that assemblage of the most excellent and most pernicious qualities. Let the reader represent to himself a man of a genius so lively, and an understanding so extensive, as rendered him scarce ignorant of any thing that could be known; of so vast and ready a comprehension, that he immediately made himself master of what he attempted; and of so prodigious a memory, that he never forgot what he had once learned: he possessed all parts of philosophy and the mathematics, particularly fortification and drawing: even in theology he was so well skilled, that he was an excellent preacher whenever he had a mind to exert that talent, and an able disputant for and against the reformed religion indifferently. He not only understood Greek, Hebrew, and all the languages which we call learned, but also all the different jargons or modern dialects. He accented and pronounced them so naturally, and so perfectly imitated the gestures and manners both of the several nations of Europe, and the particular provinces of France, that he might have been taken for a native of all or any of these countries. And this quality he applied to counterfeit all sorts of persons; wherein he succeeded wonderfully. He was, moreover, the best comedian and greatest droll that perhaps ever appeared. He had a genius for poetry, and had wrote many verses. He played upon almost all instruments, was a perfect master of music, and sung most agreeably and justly. He likewise could say mass; for he was of a disposition to do, as well as to know, all things. His body was perfectly well suited to his mind. He was light, nimble, dexterous, and fit for all exercises. He could ride well; and in dancing, wrestling, and leaping, he was admired. There are not any recreative games that he did not know; and he was skilled in almost all mechanic arts. But now for the reverse of the medal: here it appeared, that he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful; a liar, a cheat, a drunkard and glutton; a sharper in play, immersed in every species of vice, a blasphemer, an atheist. In a word; in him might be

in countries where the light of divine truth was obscured by the clouds of Popish ignorance and superstition. But what shall we say for Hacket,⁶ Aikenhead,⁷ and Hunter,⁸ three Britains, who all died

“ found all the vices contrary to nature, honour, religion, and society; the truth of which he himself evinced with his latest breath; for he died in the flower of his age, in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his debaucheries, and expired with a glass in his hand, cursing and denying God.”

Sully's Memoirs, vol. 3. p. 92, 93.

⁶Hacket lived in the time of queen Elizabeth. He affirmed himself to be anointed king of the earth by the Holy Ghost, and commanded his two disciples, Arthington and Coppinzer, to proclaim through the streets of London, that Christ was come to judge the world, and that he might be seen at the house where Hacket lodged, and that all who refused to obey him should destroy each other, and that the Queen should be dethroned. He was convicted of high-treason, and at the place of execution, repeated the following prayer:

“ Eternal God, thou knowest me to be the true Messiah, whom thou hast sent: shew some miracle from the clouds to convince those unbelievers, and free me from the power of my enemies. If thou refusest to do this, I will set fire to the heavens, and, pulling thee from thy throne, will tear thee to pieces with my hands.”—And, turning to the executioner, he said, “ Dost thou, wretch, presume to hang thy king?”—Then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he cried, “ Thou repayest me well for a kingdom bestowed; I come to take vengeance on thee.”

⁷Aikenhead suffered for blasphemy at Edinburgh in the year 1696. He denied the Being of God, and mocked at all religion, whether natural or revealed. He belonged to a society of young men, who usually met together at a tavern, where they made it a rule, that each in his turn should burn the bible, and blaspheme the name of God. He was burnt alive.

⁸Hunter was a young student in divinity, and was hung in chains at Broughton, near Edinburgh, for murdering two young gentlemen, the sons of a Mr. Gordon, whose tutor he was. He breathed out his soul, avowing he believed there was no God; or, if there was one, defying him to do his worst.—This account of these unhappy men is mostly taken from Hurd's View of all Religions, p. 142. The history of Hunter I have seen somewhere more at large, but I cannot now recollect where.

died denying the existence, or blaspheming the name of the Almighty? Or what can be advanced in behalf of Mr. William Hammon,⁹ junior, late of Liverpool, who even now, in this enlightened and philosophic age, will needs persuade us of the same thing?¹⁰ These are monsters in human form, ene-

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mies

⁹This strange man avows his atheism in the most notorious and impudent manner. "To put it out of all manner of doubt," says he, "whether there ever was such a person as a proper atheist, I do declare, that, upon my honour, I am one. Be it, therefore, for the future remembered, that in London, in the kingdom of England, in the year of our Lord 1781, a man hath publicly declared himself an atheist."—Nay he even professes his readiness to suffer martyrdom in this cause, and to glory in it.

See Hammon's Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a philosophical Unbeliever, pref. p. 17, 21.—Likewise Monthly Review for February 1783, p. 129, 131.—See also Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, vol. 1. p. 238.

¹⁰Dr. Priestley says, in the Preface to his Letters to Mr. Bourn, that "the greater part of his philosophical acquaintance ridicule his belief of Christianity." He tells us still farther, that "when he was at Paris, after a very free and serious conversation on the subject of religion, he was told by one of the company, that he was the only person they had ever met with, of whose understanding they had any opinion, who pretended to believe Christianity." He adds, "A very sincere catholic priest, hearing that on all occasions he avowed his belief of Christianity, embraced him with tears literally running down his cheeks, saying, that all who were called *philosophers* that he had met with before were *atheists*." The account which Dr. Priestley here gives us of the state of things in France has been confirmed by the conduct of the National Assembly in various instances. A paragraph in the Evening Mail for January 25th to the 27th, is directly in point.

Paris, Jan. 22, 1792.

"Such, and so rapid is the progress of irreligion, as well as in philosophy, that a book, professedly written against Christianity, and presented to the National Assembly, was loudly applauded, and honourable mention of the author ordered to be made in the Journals of the Assembly."

mies to their own race, who would rob mankind of their dearest hopes, convert the present world into delusive phantoms, and annihilate the next, that we may be at liberty to indulge our passions without controul. Voltaire¹¹ and Bolingbroke, with various others of a similar description, have done their best to convince the world, that there is no Saviour, and that we have no need of any such interposition as the gospel supposes.

It was about the beginning of the present century, in the reign of queen Ann, that the French Prophets, as they were then called, made a vast noise in Europe. Many of them came over into England, and run into the utmost extremes of folly and delusion. I will produce a specimen. One of these fanatics having asserted, that in proof of his divine mission, he would die on a particular day, and on the third day he would rise from the dead; a wag present, laid him a wager on the strength of his prophecy. The Prophet, who knew not in what

Atheism is said to be rampant at this time in France. But this, it seems, is nothing new; for Marsennus, in his commentary on Genesis, tells us, that in the year 1623, there was a vast multitude of them in France; that there were at least 50,000 Atheists at that time in the city of Paris, and that in one house sometimes a dozen were to be found. And about the same time the Author of a book called *Speculum Europæ* tells us, that atheism was very common and rampant in most parts of Italy.

See Edwards' *Thoughts on Atheism*, p. 127.

¹¹The life of Bolingbroke, and the death of Voltaire, contain no contemptible argument for the fallacy of their religious opinions. The one lived immorally, the other died wretchedly.

See *Sacred Literature*, vol. i. p. 114, 133—139.

what manner the *materia medica* operated, resolved to try the experiment, and the day was fixed. In the mean time the Enthusiast went to the father of the gentleman already mentioned, who kept an apothecary's shop in Old-street. He asked for as much opium as would make him sleep one night. Having obtained that, he bought twice as much, vainly imagining, that if one third part of the quantity would make him sleep one night, the remainder would make him sleep two nights more, after which he would arise from the dead, and give a convincing proof of his mission.

Accordingly he swallowed the three doses of opium, and his friends, who had been let into the secret of his design, and who were as ignorant as himself, had him interred in the burying ground belonging to the parish church of Cripplegate, situated in White-cross-street. The fraternity of Prophets continued singing hymns round the grave till the expiration of the three days, and the people in the neighbourhood were driven to such a state of expectation, that they neglected their lawful employments to behold this miraculous event.

At last the appointed time arrived; thousands and ten thousands of souls attended, and the grave was opened; but alas! instead of the Prophet's making his appearance in the land of the living, the coroner issued his warrant for a jury to be summoned, to enquire in what manner he came by his death.

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The verdict was found self-murder, and he was buried with a stake drove through his body in the cross-way near Dog-house bar.

This was a fatal blow to the French Prophets; their credit sunk into contempt, and they have dwindled away in such a gradual manner, that little or no remains of them are now left.¹²

SECTION III.

IT would be well if fanaticism and erroneous opinions were confined to the vulgar and illiterate. But this is by no means the case. Bolingbroke and Voltaire, just mentioned, were men of very uncommon talents. And about the commencement of this century also lived the learned Dodwell. He undertook to prove the natural mortality of human souls.¹³ At the same time, the ingenious Mr. Apgill was busy in attempting to ascertain, that, according to the covenant of eternal life revealed in the scriptures, man may be translated from hence, without passing through death.¹⁴ I never heard, however, but that the said Mr. Apgill died *the common death of all men*. What became of the soul of Dodwell, we know not. He is with God, and shall be judged according to his works.—

Moreover,

¹²Hurd's View of all Religions, p. 672.

¹³See his Epistolary Discourse on the Soul.

¹⁴See his book entitled, An Argument proving, that according to the covenant of eternal Life, &c,

Moreover, even in our own times, we have had an account of a Mrs. Buchan in Scotland, who has put herself at the head of a sect, promising her deluded followers they shall never die, but be translated, by an agreeable change, to meet the Lord in the air.¹⁵ But notwithstanding all her pretensions to the contrary, the Lord is not yet come, and the periodical prints have informed us, she is now no more. And, as though the hypothesis of escaping the dominion of the king of terrors was not sufficiently extravagant, even the very learned bishop Berkley labours to establish in the minds of men, that there is no such thing as matter in the world, and, of consequence, that we have no bodies.¹⁶

Mr.

¹⁵See European Mag. for Jan. 1785, p. 7. and do. for Dec. 1786, p. 465.—We have two relations of a similar kind in the Life of the late Rev. John Wesley, by Mr. Hamson, vol. 2. p. 130,—136. George Bell, a serjeant in the guards, prophesied the end of the world should be on the last day of February, 1763, and alarmed a large part of the metropolis. And in the year 1789, it was revealed to a young girl in the bishopric of Durham, that on a certain day in that year, the wicked should be swept, with the besom of destruction, from the face of the earth. Many gave credit to the prediction, and flocked to the deluded enthusiast from all quarters. Time is the best detector of all such fanatical pretensions.

¹⁶See his Principles of Human Knowledge, and Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.—The Bishop's scheme is not, says Dr. Doddridge, "that sensible objects have *no real existence*; or "that all is but a waking dream; he disclaims both these. His "principle is, that no sensible object exists *unperceived*; or more "plainly, that *there is no material world*; and that *primary*, as "well as secondary qualities, do only exist in the mind perceiving "them; so that if all minds were annihilated, all bodies would be "annihilated too; and that the difference between dreaming and "perceiving, is only that the latter is more active, regular, and "vivid, than the former."

Lectures, p. 101.

Mr. Hume, with a manifest intention of subverting the gospel of Christ, has undertaken to prove, that because we have now no experience of miracles being wrought, therefore a miracle is incapable of proof.¹⁷

Monsieur Freret, member of the academy of Inscriptions at Paris, and secretary to the Society at Berlin, levels the whole fabric of religion at once. He has done by the gospel as the French have done by their old constitution. The New Testament, says he, is all a forgery, contrived about Constantine's time, and is never once mentioned by the first Christian writers.¹⁸

Rousseau, one of the finest, yet most eccentric geniuses the world ever produced, hath laboured with all his ingenuity to establish the legitimacy of suicide, that whenever we are out of humour with the world we are at liberty to destroy ourselves in what way soever we judge expedient.¹⁹

The late Mr. Toplady was indefatigable in preaching and writing to prove, that the doctrines of absolute, unconditional election and reprobation, without

¹⁷See his *Essays*.

¹⁸Voltaire in the *Shades*, p. 47.—This assertion is as contrary to truth and matter of fact as light is to darkness. See Lardner's testimonies. Let the Reader, who is affected with this most audacious declaration, consult also Michaelis' *Lectures on the New Testament*, sect. 2.

¹⁹See his *Eloise*.

without the smallest qualification, are revealed in holy scripture as the truths of God; and that a very small number of the adult part of mankind, comparatively speaking, is included in this awful decree.²⁰

Mr. Jeremiah White,²¹ Mr. Hartley,²² and many others, on the contrary, good men and true, were equally zealous in propagating the doctrine of universal restitution, asserting, that not only all mankind will be finally saved, but that even the devils themselves shall be delivered out of their infernal abodes, and made the monuments of God's everlasting complacency and delight.

The late Emanuel Swedenborg was a man of great seeming piety, and of undoubted learning. He began, if we may credit his own declarations, a new dispensation of religion.²³ Various of his followers, men

²⁰See his "Translation of Zanchius, and Vindication of the Decrees," passim.

²¹See his book entitled, "The Restoration of all Things."

²²See his works, passim.

²³The Baron's own account is as follows. "I was at London," says he, "and dined late at my usual inn, where I had a room kept for me, that I might have the liberty to meditate in peace on spiritual things. I had felt myself pressed by hunger, and was eating very heartily. Towards the end of the meal, I perceived that a kind of a mist came over my eyes, and I saw the floor of the room covered with frightful reptiles, such as serpents, toads, caterpillars, and others. Their number appeared to encrease as the darkness did, but soon passed away. After that, I saw clearly a man in the midst of a bright and shining light sitting in a corner of the room. I was alone, and you may judge of the consternation I was in, when I heard him pronounce distinctly, and in a sound of voice very capable of striking terror, *Eat not so much*. After these words, my sight began to grow obscure, but came to, by little and little, and then I saw myself alone in the room. Still a little frightened at what I had seen, I made haste to my own apartment, without speaking to any one of what had

men of equal seeming piety and sincerity with himself, at least, if not of equal learning, are straining every nerve to establish a kind of Sabellianism, and a number of other old exploded heresies, with the addition

“ happened to me. I there reflected seriously on it, and could find
 “ no reason to suppose it to be an effect from chance, or any physical
 “ cause.

“ The following night, the same person appeared to me, in a
 “ strong shining light, and said,—I AM GOD THE LORD,
 “ THE CREATOR AND REDEEMER; I HAVE CHOSEN THEE TO EXPLAIN TO MEN THE INTERIOR
 “ AND SPIRITUAL SENSE OF THE SACRED WRITINGS. I WILL DICTATE UNTO THEE WHAT
 “ YOU OUGHT TO WRITE.—I was not at all frightened
 “ now, and the light with which he was encompassed, although very
 “ bright and resplendent, occasioned no painful impression on
 “ my eyes. He was clothed in purple, and the vision lasted a full
 “ quarter of an hour. That same night were the eyes of my spirit
 “ opened, and disposed so that I might have a spiritual sight of
 “ heaven, the world of spirits, and the hells; and I found every
 “ where many persons of my own acquaintance; some of them
 “ deceased a long, and others but a short time.

“ From that day I gave up all my worldly occupations, that I
 “ might have leisure to employ myself in spiritual ones, in conformity
 “ to the command I had received.

“ It happened often unto me after that period, that my spiritual
 “ sight was opened so far, that I could see in the most clear and
 “ distinct manner, what passed in the spiritual world, and converse
 “ with angels and spirits, in the same manner as I speak with men.”
 “ Again, in another place:—“ The Lord, our Saviour, manifested
 “ himself to me in a sensible personal appearance; he commanded
 “ me to write what has already been done, and what I have still to
 “ do; he was afterwards graciously pleased to endow me with the
 “ privilege of conversing with angels and spirits, and to be in fellowship
 “ with them.—I am ready to testify with the most solemn
 “ oath that can be offered in this matter, that I have said nothing
 “ but essential and real truth, without any mixture of deception.”

This is the Baron's own account of his miraculous call. It is no difficult matter to give him credit for his piety and good intentions. But we need only peruse his visions and interpretations of holy

¹Sandels' Eulogium on Swedenborg, p. 28.

²Ibid. p. 21

on of a comfortable variety of new ones, such as never before entered into the pericranium of any human being, which they meet with in the writings of their learned Founder.

A scripture to be fully satisfied, that he laboured under a dérangement of intellect of a peculiar nature. In this respect he was to be pitied, rather than blamed. Nor is there any thing very uncommon in his situation. The pious and learned Simon Browne was for many years persuaded God had destroyed the intellectual principle within him; and "whilst he was under the influence of this "strange frenzy, it was extremely remarkable, that his faculties "appeared to be in every other respect in their full vigour. He "continued to apply himself to his studies, and discovered the "same force of understanding which had formerly distinguished "him, both in his conversation and in his writings." Somewhat similar is the state of one of the first literary characters of the present day; only with this difference, that whereas Mr. Browne thought he had no soul, the learned gentleman in question imagines he has no body: and when a friend has been introduced to him, he would answer upon being asked whether he knew the person, "O yes, I recollect you perfectly well in the other world: you "were so and so employed." Swedenborg was doubtless like these gentlemen; and not unlike to his state also was that of the man of Argos in Greece,

"Qui se credebat miros audire tragædos,

"In vacuo lætus sessor, plauforque theatro."

"Who wond'rous tragedies was wont to hear

"Sitting alone in th' empty theatre."

Besides the above peculiar instances of mental dérangement, I myself have personally known more than one instance of a similar kind. That the Baron therefore should labour under such a disorder, and that he should be able to write many books during the continuance of it, is not so extraordinary. But, that pious, sensible men should indefatigably labour to convince the world, of the truth, reality, and importance of all his strange reveries, is truly astonishing, and cannot so easily be accounted for. It may indeed be said, that his writings, if we are much conversant with them, will either find us déranged, or make us so. I know no books in the world so likely to effect this purpose as his and the Teutonic philosopher's. They were kindred souls. The Baron's great learning, however, gave

¹Biographia Britannica.

²Horat. Epist, l. 2. ep. 2. l. 129, 130.

A few years ago, I think it was in 1783, a young Presbyterian clergyman, with all the prejudices upon his mind against Popery, which usually distinguish that class of men, set sail from America, and visited France, England, and Italy. In the last of these countries he staid a considerable time; and, at length, became a convert to all the peculiarities of the Roman religion. After he had been pretty well confirmed in his new faith, he sailed to his native country again, and has formed to himself a plan of converting as many of the Americans as possible to his new opinions. He has also published his own life and wonderful conversion, and seems to be enflamed with a mighty zeal for the salvation of his countrymen. That the young man means well is pretty evident. And he writes in favour of all the absurdities of Popery with a good deal of plausibility. The book is cried up among the members of that Communion as a thing very extraordinary. But any person of the least discernment, whose mind is not unreasonably preoccupied in favour of a party, may easily discover the sophistry and false

him vast advantage, and he bids fair for being the head of a considerable party in this country. The more absurd his notions, the more likely they are to take with a certain description of our fellow creatures. If his treatise on heaven and hell will not satisfy any man, that the above assertions concerning his derangement are founded in truth, it must be said, such a reader is far advanced in the same disorder.—He denies the resurrection of the dead, tells us that the last judgment took place in the year 1757, that the spiritual kingdom of Christ commenced on the 19th day of June, 1770, and that his own doctrine is speedily to prevail over the whole world, and to continue forever!

false reasoning which runs through the little performance. It is curious to see a Presbyterian parson addressing himself to the virgin Mary, and vowing in future to make it his business to promote her cause. "Oh tender Mother," said he, "if it be lawful for me to implore thy succour, help me in the miserable state in which I am. It was through thee that the Saviour came to us; it is through thee that I desire to go to him. The scriptures teach me, that by thy means was wrought the first miracle of the evangelical law in the order of grace, the sanctification of St. John the Baptist, and the first in the order of nature, the change of water into wine. Here remains another to be performed; do not refuse to employ thy credit; I do not deserve it; too long have I not known thee; but now, though with fear and trembling, I begin to address thee; intercede for me with thy Divine Son." Then turning to Christ, "Oh Lord," said he, "I implore thy light; thou hast promised to listen to those who invoke thee; I do it from the bottom of my heart: thou art my witness that I seek truth at whatever expence: I cannot err in addressing my supplications to thy blessed Mother: Thou thyself wouldst be the cause of my error."—Then he adds—"Confidence and tranquillity were the fruits of this prayer. From that time I have always had recourse to the blessed Virgin, and I am

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"confident

“ confident that I have received grace through her
 “ intercession; gratitude obliges me to make this
 “ acknowledgment. I endeavour to join in every
 “ institution which tends to her honour, and I have
 “ pledged myself, and study as much as can depend
 “ on me, to extend the devotion to this dear Mo-
 “ ther of God.”

A little after, this well-meaning idolater adds—
 “ The truths, which I had most difficulty in believing,
 “ are those in which I now find the greatest conso-
 “ lation. The mystery of the eucharist, which ap-
 “ peared to me so incredible, is become an ever-
 “ flowing source of spiritual delight. Confession,
 “ which I had considered as an insupportable yoke,
 “ seems infinitely sweet, by the tranquillity which it
 “ produces in the soul. Oh! if Protestants and
 “ unbelievers could taste those sweets which are felt
 “ at the foot of the altar, they would soon alter their
 “ sentiments! Oh! that I could be heard by them
 “ all, I would cry out to them; Taste and see how
 “ sweet and good is the Lord to those who serve
 “ him in the holy society, which he has formed
 “ himself, and which he vivifies by his Spirit. This
 “ is the prevailing wish, this is the only desire of my
 “ heart, to extend as much as lies in my power, the
 “ dominion of the true faith, which is now my joy
 “ and comfort. I ambition nothing more: for this
 “ purpose I desire to return to my own country, in
 “ hopes, notwithstanding my unworthiness, to be

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“ the instrument of the conversion of my country-
“ men. And such is my conviction of the truth of
“ the Roman Catholic church, and my gratitude
“ for the signal grace of being called to the true
“ faith, that I would willingly seal it with my blood,
“ if God would grant me this favour, and I doubt
“ not but he would enable me to do it. I entreat
“ all those who shall peruse this narrative, to pray
“ with fervour the Father of Lights, and the God
“ of Mercies, to bless the designs of his unworthy
“ servant, and to open an easy access to the faith in
“ my country, and to cause it to shoot forth and
“ fructify in a land in which it has never yet been
“ professed. Perhaps, and I dwell with pleasure
“ on the consoling thought, perhaps, I say, he who
“ raises up, and casts down empires, as he pleases,
“ who does all for his elect, and for the interest of
“ his church, has only permitted and brought to an
“ end, the surprising revolution of which we have
“ been witnesses, in order to accomplish some great
“ design, and much more happy revolution in the
“ order of grace.”*

Nothing less, we see, than the conversion of all America to the Roman Catholic religion can satisfy the wishes, and expectations of this zealous young man!

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*See an Account of the Conversion of the Rev. John Thayer, lately a Protestant Minister at Boston in North America.

The late Mr. Whiston was apparently not less pious, sincere, and learned than any of the former; and it is well known he was a violent opposer of the Socinians,² and ready to compass sea and land to make profelytes to the system of Arius.

The present³ venerable Dr. Price,⁴ and other dissenting teachers, are embarked in the same cause; and, with much warmth, and considerable ability, are still labouring to promote the interests of that party.

SECTION

²Giving advice for the study of divinity, he says, "As for those real errors and heresies, which so much infest the Christian world, I mean new and pernicious doctrines, which have neither foundation in scripture nor antiquity, I think this method of study in divinity, if once generally obtained, would go a great way towards their utter exclusion and extirpation. For instance, this method would destroy the strange doctrine of the Socinians, who by a sad *αμετρία της ανβολης* have been so affrighted by the modern, absurd, and unjustifiable notions about the ever-blessed Trinity, that they are gone with a witness into the opposite extreme, and not only deny our Lord's original divinity, which is every where so plain in scripture and antiquity; but affirm that he had no existence till he was born of the blessed Virgin; quite contrary to the entire current of the scripture, and of all the most ancient Christian writers."

Advice for the Study of Divinity, p. 291.

³The Doctor was living when this was written.

⁴The Doctor says, when speaking of the divine nature and generation of our blessed Saviour—"There is scarcely any thing that strikes me more, with a conviction of the infirmity of the human understanding, than the zeal with which this most groundless and absurd notion has been received by some of the ablest and best men."—This is too positive. While he blames others, he himself is to be blamed. While he talks of the infirmity of others, he himself gives us an example of it in himself. The Doctor should have considered, that the understandings of other men may be as good as his own, and equally as capable of discovering the truth or fallacy of any particular doctrine of divine revelation. His Ser-

SECTION IV.

AND even now, while Hammon is pleasing himself with sowing the seeds of atheism; the disciples of Voltaire with propagating deism; the followers of Swedenborg with advancing the New Jerusalem dispensation; Thayer with converting the Americans to Popery; and Price and others with degrading their Saviour and Sanctifier to the head of the angelic orders; Dr. Priestley⁵ is insist-

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mons contain many good things, and upon the whole there is an amiable spirit running through the whole. His reasonings, however, are in several instances defective and inconclusive; and less dogmaticalness would have become him well. The Doctor's mind is not of that size to justify his absolute determinations upon subjects where the greatest and best of men have been of a different opinion.

I happened to be in London on Nov. 4, 1789, when the Doctor preached his "Discourse on the Love of our Country," and had the curiosity to go and hear it. The Doctor delivered it with all the animation of which he was capable, and the great bulk of the congregation received it with equal ardour. In all those parts of the discourse where he advanced any thing peculiarly severe against Kings, Monarchies, and Ministers, the people seemed so pleased and elated, that they were ready to clap the venerable old Gentleman. The sermon however is before the public, and they have formed their opinions upon it. It undoubtedly contains many good things; and, I confess, the Doctor is with me, in several respects, a favourite writer. But I neither approve his Arian sentiments, which I am confident he has not established; nor can I see the propriety of his theologico-politico-discourse. The Doctor was a well-meaning, mistaken man; but yet a man, who had the happiness of mankind much at heart.

⁵How contrary to the above matters of fact is the address of Dr. Priestley to the inhabitants of Birmingham? "You are told," says he "that there are many deep mysteries in religion, and therefore that your clergy must teach you what to think, or rather what to say about them. But be persuaded to think better of

ing upon it with full as much confidence as any of the former, that all the Christian world is now wrong, and hath been wrong, almost ever since the death

“ yourselves and of your own understandings. These things are
 “ not in reality of so difficult a nature as many things in your com-
 “ mon trade, and business. The most important questions rela-
 “ ting to religion are the plainest things in the world, and require
 “ nothing but a common understanding, honestly applied, to com-
 “ prehend them.” Part 3. p. 22.

If the deep things of religion are so very easy to be comprehended, whence all this difference of opinion among men, who are naturally the best qualified to judge? The Doctor's assertions are in direct opposition to matter of fact and experience. Do not the Arians oppose the Trinitarians, the Trinitarians the Arians, and the Socinians both? And have not each of the schemes men of very considerable learning and abilities to defend them? Dr. Priestley seems here to forget, that the moral qualities are, at least, of as great consequence as the natural in the discovery of religious truth. A man may be a great mathematician, logician, metaphysician, mechanic, hydrostatist, pneumatist, electrician, or even what is usually called a philosopher, and yet be a stranger to most of those dispositions which are essentially necessary to the discovery of religious truth. An humble mind, sincerity of soul, pious inclinations, an earnest wish and endeavour to know and do the whole will of God so far as we know it, a prayerful spirit, divine illumination, these and such as these are the qualifications which are necessary to constitute any man a true Christian. And let a man's natural abilities and human attainments be what they may: if he is a walking library; if his head contains the principles of all arts and sciences, human and divine, yet if he is destitute of the above moral and religious qualifications he will never arrive at the knowledge of saving truth. For if St. Paul's opinion may have any weight, and this be not one of those places where he reasons inconclusively, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. 2. 14.—See also Mat. 11. 25, and Jas. 1. 5.—Great abilities and great attainments are usually a great snare. Knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth. *The meek will God guide in judgement, and the meek will he learn his way*, Ps. 25. 9.

Upon another occasion, when it suits his purpose, Dr. Priestley speaks of passages of scripture being “ highly figurative, and peculiarly difficult to understand.” Familiar Illustration, p. 3.

death of our blessed Saviour;⁶ that most of the Fathers, Martyrs and Confessors lived and died gross idolaters; that religion never had been understood till Socinus arose in the sixteenth century; nay, that Socinus himself, in contending for the adoration of Jesus Christ, was capitally mistaken; and that the world, for the last seventeen hundred years, never hath had proper views of religious truth, till now that it has been enlightened by himself and fellow-labourers in the good work. Thus, respecting the person of our Saviour, one cries, Lo! this is the nature of Christ, and you must believe as I do: Another, This is the nature of Christ, and you must believe as I do: And a third, You are all egregiously mistaken, for this is the nature of Christ, and the whole world will be of my opinion in a little time.⁷ One assures us with mighty zeal, that Christ

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“It is an easy matter for men of wit and fancy to find fault with any thing! but it requires thought and judgment to settle things upon their true bottom. Let those who are displeased with the received doctrine, shew us a better, and form any other consistent scheme (consistent with scripture and with itself) if they can. Wise and good men will be always willing to reform, if there be cause for it; but they will not be forward to pull down what appears to be founded upon a rock, in order only to build upon the sand. The Trinitarians have some satisfaction in observing, how long certain great wits have been employed in new-modelling Christianity, and have not yet been able to agree in any one certain scheme.”

An Author quoted by bishop Horne in his Sermon on contending for the Faith.

⁷See Dr. Priestley's Importance of Free Inquiry, passim.

of the angelic order; another informs us with equal confidence, that Christ is both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and a third will needs persuade us, with a positiveness not in the least inferior to either of the former, that "Christ is a *mere* man like ourselves;⁸ the son of Joseph and Mary;⁹ capable of misapplying the scriptures of the Old Testament;¹ naturally fallible, peccable, weak like other men; liable to sin, as well as subject to error."²

Upon Dr. Priestley's hypothesis, that Christ is no more than a *mere* man, I am free to acknowledge the truth of almost every thing he advances in his observations on the inspiration of Christ. The essay is well written, and very plausible; "but all is false and hollow." The Doctor is an ingenious man, and can "make the worse appear the better reason:" but I deny each of the above positions with all the earnestness of which I am capable of speaking. I deny absolutely, that Christ was a *mere* man—that he was the *natural* son of Joseph and Mary—that he was capable of misapplying the scriptures of the Old Testament—that he was naturally fallible, peccable,

⁸See Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Price, *passim*.

⁹*Ibid.* pages 152 and 172.

¹*Ibid.* page 148, &c.

²See Theological Repository, vol. 4. p. 435—461.—See also Letters to Mr. Burn, p. 2. where Dr. Priestley acknowledges himself the author of those papers in the Repository, which speak of Christ in this degrading manner.

cable, weak, like other men—that he was liable to sin, as well as subject to error.—Every one of these positions I deny, and must say with Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley's particular friend; “It appears to me, that the doctrine of Christ's simple humanity, when viewed in connexion with the scripture account of his exaltation, implies an inconsistency, and improbability, which falls little short of an impossibility; and, consequently, that this doctrine not only renders the scriptures *unintelligible*, but Christianity itself *incredible*.”³

Without entering, however, into a discussion of these several particulars at large, I will only refer the Reader at present, to a few of the many scriptures, which seem to me to disprove and subvert his whole system. The Doctor, no doubt, thinks otherwise. I will therefore produce them, and appeal to all candid men, for a fair and just interpretation.

The first passages of holy scripture, to which I would call the attention of the serious Reader, are those where Christ is called God: Ps. 45. 6, compared with Heb. 1. 8.—Ps. 68. 18, compared with Ep. 4. 8.—Ps. 102. 24, 25, 26, 27, compared with Heb. 1. 10, 11, 12.—Isaiah 9. 6.—Mat. 1. 23.—John 1. 1, 14.—John 10. 33.—John 20. 28.—Acts 20. 28.—Rom. 9. 5.—Gal. 1. 1, 12.—Col. 2. 9.—1 Tim. 3. 16.—Tit. 2. 13.—1 John 5. 20.

Secondly,

³Sermons on the Christian Doctrine, p. 146.

Secondly, Those where he is called the Son of God, and his only-begotten Son, one and equal with his Father; the most remarkable of which are these: Ps. 2. 12.—Mat. 11. 27.—Ibid. 14. 33.—Ibid. 16. 26.—Ibid. 26. 63, 64.—Mark 14. 61, 62.—Luke 10. 22.—Ibid. 22. 70, 71.—John 1. 14, 18, 49.—Ibid. 3. 16.—Ibid. 5. 18.—Acts 8. 37.—Ibid. 9. 20.—Rom. 1. 3, 4.—Ibid. 5. 10.—Ibid. 8. 3, 32.—1 Cor. 1. 9.—2 Cor. 1. 19.—Heb. 1. 2, 5.—Ibid. 3. 6.—Ibid. 4. 14.—Ibid. 5. 8.—1 John 2. 22, 23, 24.—Ibid. 4. 9, 10, 15.

Thirdly, Those where he is called Lord, and the supreme Lord; the chief of which are these:—Luke 1. 16, 43.—Ibid. 2. 11.—Acts 10. 36.—1 Cor. 5. 4, 5.—Ibid. 8. 6.—Ibid. 12. 3.—Ibid. 15. 47.—1 Tim. 6. 15.—Rev. 19. 16.

Fourthly, Those where he is said to be worshipped and prayed to:—Mat. 2. 11.—Ibid. 14. 33.—Ibid. 28. 9.—Ibid. 28. 19.—John 5. 23.—Ibid. 9. 38.—Acts 7. 59.—2 Cor. 13. 14.—1 Thes. 3. 11.—2 Thes. 2. 16, 17.—Heb. 1. 6.—Rev. 1. 6.—Ibid. 5. 8, 13.

Fifthly, We find the incommunicable attributes of God ascribed to him, namely, creation, eternity, omnipotence, almighty power, that of forgiving sins, of dispensing all spiritual graces, of sending the Holy Ghost:—John 1. 3, 10.—1 Cor. 8. 6.—Col. 1. 16, 17.—

John 1. 1, 2, 15, 30.—Ibid. 6. 62.—Ibid. 8. 58.—Ibid. 17. 5.—Col. 1. 15.—Rev. 1. 17.—

Mat,

Mat. 18. 20.—Ibid. 28. 20.—John 1. 48, 49.—
—Ibid. 2. 24, 25.—Ibid. 3. 13.—Ibid. 16. 30.—
Ibid. 21. 17.—Rev. 2. 23.—

John 5. 21.—Acts 9. 34.—Phil. 3. 21.—
Heb. 1. 3.

Mat. 9. 2—6.—Mark 2. 5—12.—Luke 5. 18
—26.—Ibid. 7. 48.—Col. 3. 13.—

Rom. 1. 7.—Gal. 1. 3.—Ibid. 6. 18.—Ep.
1. 2.—Ibid. 6. 23.—Phil. 1. 19.—1 Thes. 1. 1.—
1 Tim. 1. 12.—2 Tim. 1. 2.—2 John 3.

John 16. 7.

Lastly, He is said to have been a sacrifice and a
ransom for our sins, and to have made a propitiati-
on and reconciliation for us; all which could no
more have been done by the blood of a *mere* man,
than by the blood of bulls and goats:—Is. 53. 4, 5,
6.—Mat. 20. 28.—Ibid. 26. 28.—Mark 10. 45.—
Rom. 3. 24, 25.—Ibid. 4. 25.—Ibid. 5. 10.—
1 Cor. 1. 30.—Ibid. 5. 7.—Ibid. 15. 3.—2 Cor.
5. 18, 19, 21.—Gal. 1. 4.—Ibid. 2. 20.—Ep. 1. 7.
—Ibid. 5. 2.—Col. 1. 14.—1 Thes. 1. 10.—Ibid. 5.
9, 10.—Heb. 9. 28.—1 Pet. 2. 24.—1 John 3. 16.
—Ibid. 4, 10, 14.—Rev. 1. 5, 6.—Ibid. 5. 9, 10.
—Ibid. 7. 14.

Besides the above passages of holy scripture there
are many others from which the divinity of our
blessed Saviour may be rightly inferred; but these

seem

seem to me more than sufficient to convince any man, who has a due regard to the sacred writings.*

After speaking thus disrespectfully, or rather thus degradingly and blasphemously, of the Son of God and Saviour of men, we shall not wonder to hear the gentleman say, that “ he thinks himself at liberty to
“ consider the history which Moses has given us of
“ the creation and fall of man, as the best he could
“ collect from tradition, and that in his opinion al-
“ so there are many marks of its being a very lame
“ account; and far from solving the difficulty, which
it

“ It is the constant tenor of scripture, that atonement for the
“ sins of the world was made by our great High-priest upon
“ the cross; that his death was our redemption, and his blood the
“ price paid for us.”

Bishop Sherlock's Discourses at the Temple church, p. 212.

Dr. Watts also declares—“ To me it is evident as the sun-beams,
“ that while the New Testament restores natural religion to us in
“ the brightest and fairest light, and lays the strongest obligations
“ on us to perform all the duties of it; yet it still supposes the im-
“ possibility of our salvation thereby, through our own incapacity
“ to perform these duties perfectly; and therefore it sets forth to
“ our view the blessed sacrifice of the Son of God, which is the
“ only true and proper atonement for our sins.”

Redeemer and Sanctifier, p. 27.

“ The redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, and the
“ sacrifice of himself upon the cross, together with its consequent
“ doctrine of justification by faith alone, were the great gospel
“ principles on which Protestantism was founded, on the first ge-
“ neral separation from the church of Rome.—The doctrine of re-
“ demption, is the primum mobile of the gospel-system. To this
“ the church must steadily adhere, let the storm against it beat from
“ what quarter it may. It is the first duty of the ministers of re-
“ ligion to secure this great foundation.” Bishop Warburton's
“ Doctrine of Grace, p. 230, 237.

“ it seems intended to answer, namely, the introduction of death and calamity into the world.”⁵

Again:--“ It is *generally* thought that we are at liberty to suppose, that by days in the Mosaic account of the creation, long periods of an indefinite length were intended.”⁶

Is it *generally* thought so? I believe not. The great bulk of mankind, I apprehend, understand the history of the creation just as it is, without any quibble, evasion, or refinement. If the Doctor means only, that the great bulk of the learned understand it as he supposes: In this supposition also I rather think he is mistaken. The orthodox of every denomination are of a different opinion. And they are, probably, a much greater number than those who differ from them. What the Doctor says then is not true, that it is *generally thought* the days mentioned in the history of the creation were not natural days.

Again:—

⁵Much more honourable and becoming is the opinion of the pious and excellent Mr. Matthew Henry. “ Some think,” says he, “ the book of Genesis was written by Moses when he was in Midian, for the instruction and comfort of his suffering brethren in Egypt. I rather think he wrote it in the wilderness, after he had been in the mount with God, where probably he received full and particular instructions for the writing of it. And as he framed the tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable fabric of this book, exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the mount; into which it is better to resolve the certainty of the things herein contained, than into any tradition which possibly might be handed down from Adam to Methuselah, from him to Shem, from him to Abraham, and so to the family of Jacob.”⁴

⁶ Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 29.

⁴ Introduction to the book of Genesis.

Again:—"There are few persons indeed, who
 "are willing to admit that the account (of the cre-
 "ation by Moses) is literally true." The Doctor
 then adds as a reason for this assertion:—"Because,
 "judging from the analogy of the divine dispensa-
 "tions, they think, that so much of *interposition*,
 "and *deviation from regular laws*, was not necessary;
 "and they cannot help thinking it improbable, con-
 "sidering the slowness with which the course of na-
 "ture proceeds, that the constitution of things
 "should have advanced so very rapidly at its first
 "establishment." Here again, I apprehend, the
 Doctor is guilty of an erroneous assertion, since
 there is no reason to doubt but that the great bulk
 of Christians believe the creation to have taken place
 exactly as it is described by Moses.* There may
 be a few sceptics, and a few unbelievers to be found
 among speculative men, but the large body of seri-
 ous and sober Christians are now, and have been in
 every age, firm believers in the cosmogony of
 Moses.

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*Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 29.

"Most of the Commentators of the Old Testament, except in-
 "fidels, and freethinkers, believed every particular of the first
 "chapter of Genesis to be true in itself; though perhaps they
 "might not take it right."—

"As to the holy Fathers, and other orthodox expositors of ho-
 "ly writ, these believing the whole text to be divinely inspired, as
 "undoubtedly it is, might very safely and justly search after differ-
 "ent meanings of the text."

Berington's Dissertations on the Mosaical Creation, p. 60, 66.

The reason the Doctor gives for not believing it, is truly curious; and, as it seems to me, utterly unworthy of a man who has gained a just reputation in philosophical pursuits. He says, there was "too much of interposition and deviation from regular laws." Other men, however, will probably think, that as the world was incapable of forming itself, or even of contributing to it in the smallest degree, the *whole was interposition*.

As to its being a deviation from regular laws, this could not be. There were no regular laws, but those of creation. The course of nature was not established. It could not therefore be a deviation. The whole process, no doubt, was agreeable to its own proper laws. But as creation is an unique, and the general laws of it are described no where, with proper authority, but by Moses, and in a manner which hath often been cavilled with, but never refuted, it seems unphilosophical, as well as untheological, to call it a deviation from regular laws.

But

"The volumes of interpreters, and commentators on the Old and New Testament, are but too manifest proofs of this. *The* every thing said in the text be infallibly true, yet the Reader may be, nay, cannot chuse but be very fallible in the understanding of it."

Locke's Essay, b. 3. c. 9. s. 23.

Still fuller the author of the Illustration of the Holy Scriptures:—
"As for the creation of the world, though questionless it was revealed to Adam, and so passed over to his posterity, by teachings and traditions from father to son, yet *without doubt* Moses had thereof, a new, full, and most certain knowledge by divine revelation, and infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost." The Argument.

But whatever Dr. Priestley may say to the contrary, and howsoever he may depreciate the cosmogony of this great man, whom he has the assurance to represent as contradicting himself; * he cannot convict the famous epochs of the creation, of the flood, and of division of languages, of falsehood; seeing they agree with every thing that is certain and likely in all other histories. Hence it is evident, that Moses' memoirs were of divine original, and that he was directed by the Spirit of the Creator, to be able to determine so precisely the time of the creation. †

Indeed, upon the whole, the Doctor's observations on the inspiration of Moses are very weak, trifling, and unworthy of a man of his reputation in the philosophical world. If they were just, yet they are trifling, and would be of no benefit to mankind. But, as they are far otherwise, they are only calculated to mislead and unsettle the minds of the superficial and unwary. They are old deistical objections modernized and new vamped, which can have little or no weight with religious characters. Men of sober minds, cool heads, and solid attainments, easily see through them.

Let

“Lame as I think I have shewn the cosmogony of Moses to be, and contradicted by facts recorded by himself.” *Theolog. Repos.* vol. 4. p. 37.

“If there had been any thing repugnant to common reason in the history of the creation, the fall of man, the universal deluge, the propagation of the world by the sons of Noah, the history of the Patriarchs, had not Moses rational faculties as well as we?”

Let the pious Reader, who has a true concern for the honour of Moses* and holy scripture consult the following passages of the bible. They are plain,

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full

“ Nay, had he them not far better improved than any of ours are?”

Bishop Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*, book 2. chap. 2.

If the Reader wishes to see the account of the creation fully vindicated against the futile objections of Dr. Priestley, and other cavillers, let him consult this very learned and able work.—He will find much entertainment and satisfaction also on the same subject in Delan's *Revelation Examined with Candour*.—Berington's *Dissertations on the Mosaic Creation* may be read with advantage.—Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*, on the first chapter of Genesis, will afford some light.—For the universality of the deluge, among other authors, see Bishop Watson's *Discourse to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Ely*, from whence it appears, that the tradition of an universal deluge is common in most of the Eastern countries. In the same *Discourse* this learned and liberal minded Prelate observes, that “ Philosophers have some difficulty in reconciling natural appearances with the Mosaic relation of the creation and the deluge, but the history of the human race in every part of the globe confirms them both.” Page 222.

“ It cannot be denied, that Sir Isaac Newton had read and thought much upon the subject, and that the result of his inquiry was a perfect contempt of all the rivals of Moses. And the same may be said of Locke, Boyle, Bacon, and other famous Laymen.”

See Bishop Berkley's *Minute Philosopher*, vol. 2. p. 87.

“ Moses, the most ancient, is the most perfect of historians.”

Apthorp's *Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity*, p. 24.

Solomon lived four or five hundred years after Moses. In the thirtieth chapter of his book of Proverbs we have Agur's confession of faith respecting the sacred writings then in being—*Every word of God*, says he, *is pure*. The five books of Moses were certainly written at that time, and were considered as the standard of the Jewish faith. When therefore Agur says, that *every word of God is pure*, it seems probable he meant, that every part of the writings of the Jewish lawgiver was free from the least alloy of error and depravity.

St. Peter, when the Jewish canon was complete, has a declaration of the same import with this of Agur: *As new born babes*, says he, *desire the sincere milk of the word*: the sincere, unadulterated, and pure word, without any mixture of error, or any tincture of falsehood and folly.—How different is this account of Agur and Peter to that which Dr. Priestley would palm upon the world?

full and satisfactory, for the inspiration of the Old Testament, at least, and particularly for the inspiration of the five books of Moses. Nor does there appear the smallest intimation of any part of it not being authentic, or of inferior authority. If they mean any thing less than general inspiration and infallibility, all human language is delusive, and the bible calculated only to mislead and deceive:—

Exod. 17. 14.—Ibid. 24. 4.—Ibid. 34. 27.—Numbers 32. 2.—Deut. 17. 18, 19.—Ibid. 31. 9—13.—Ibid. 31. 24—26.—Jof. 1. 7, 8.—Ibid. 8. 30—35.—1 Kings 2. 3.—2 Kings 21. 8.—2 Chron. 23. 18.—Ibid. 33. 8.—Ps. 19. 7—11.—Ibid. 119, throughout.—Ez. 11. 5.—Mal. 4. 4.—Mat. 4. 4, 7, 10.—Ibid. 5. 17, 18.—Ibid. 21. 42.—Ibid. 22. 29, 31, 43.—Ibid. 24. 15.—Ibid. 26. 54, 56.—Mark 12. 24, 26.—Luke 1. 67, 69, 70.—Ibid. 10. 26, 27.—Ibid. 16. 31.—Ibid. 24. 25, 27, 44.—John 1. 17, 45.—Ibid. 5. 39, 46, 47.—Ibid. 10. 35.—Acts 1. 16.—Ibid. 2. 16, 25—35.—Ibid. 3. 22, 24.—Ibid. 4. 25.—Ibid. 7. 1, 38.—Ibid. 15. 21.—Ibid. 17. 11.—Ibid. 18, 24, 28.—Ibid. 24. 14.—Ibid. 28. 25.—Rom. 2. 16.—Ibid. 3. 2. 10.—Ibid. 9. 25, 27, 29.—Ibid. 10. 5. 11, 16.—Ibid. 15. 4.—Ibid. 16. 26.—1 Cor. 2. 7.—Ibid. 10. 11, 13.—Ibid. 14. 37.—2 Cor. 3. 15.—Ibid. 4. 13.—Ibid. 6. 16, 17.—Gal. 3. 8.—Ep. 3. 3, 5.—Col. 3. 16.—1 Thes. 2. 13.—Ibid. 4. 15.—1 Tim. 5. 18.—2 Tim. 3. 15, 16.—Heb. 1. 1, 5—13.

5---13.---Ibid. 3. 7.---Ibid. 5. 12.---Jas. 2. 8.
---Ibid. 4. 5, 6.---1 Pet. 1. 10, 12.---Ibid. 4.
11.---2 Pet. 1. 19---21.---1 John 4. 6.—

Notwithstanding the above degrading idea which the learned gentleman would give us of the writings of Moses, yet he professes to “believe in the perpetual obligation of all the laws which Moses prescribed to the Jews; and that circumcision, and other customs derived from their ancestors, were intended to distinguish them from all other nations, as the peculiar people of God to the end of the world.”²

Nay, he has lately discovered, that “Jesus the son of Joseph and Mary, was only a suffering Messiah, but that another Messiah will certainly come, who shall be the prince of the house of David, under whom the Jews are to enjoy the great prosperity that is promised to them in the latter days.”³

The same sentiment is repeated in another part of the Doctor’s writings:---“I have no doubt,” says he, “but that a distinguished state of happiness and glory is reserved for them, and that it will

Y 2

continue

²Letters to the Jews, p. 5 and 54.

³Ibid. p. 39 and 40.—James Edward Hamilton, Esq. has lately published his “*Strictures upon Primitive Christianity*.” He professes himself an Ebionite; rejects the whole of the New Testament, except the gospel by St. Mark; and considers the laws of Moses and the character of Jesus much in the same light as Dr. Priestley does in the above two passages.

“ continue without interruption to the end of time.”⁴
 It may be observed upon this *Jewish* declaration, that it sometimes happens, where the Doctor ought to doubt, he has no doubt at all, and where he ought to be positive and determined, he abounds in doubts and negations.

SECTION V.

A GAIN:---“ All the psalms, without exception, “ appear to me to be such poetical compositions, as intelligent and pious men may well be “ supposed to have made, *without any supernatural “ assistance.*”⁵

This is another bold and hasty assertion, directly contrary to the most clear and positive evidence, as well as a variety of internal characters of inspiration.

Dr. Priestley seems to rest the fact of an author's inspiration pretty much upon his *declaring* himself inspired.⁶ If this be a just criterion of judging, then the writings of David will all come under the description of inspired. For he declared in the most
 general

⁴Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 120.—In opposition to all that Dr. Priestley and the modern Jews tell us about another Messiah to come, who is to be triumphant and victorious, Dean Prideaux, that sound scholar and judicious critic says:—“ All that they tell us of “ their twofold Messiah, is a mere fiction framed without as “ much as a pretence to any foundation in scripture for it; a vile “ and most pitiful fetch, invented only to evade what they cannot “ answer; and their being forced to have recourse to such a “ wretched shift, is a plain giving up of the cause they make use “ of it for.” Connection, part 2. b. 8. p. 582.

⁵Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 98.—⁶Ibid. p. 97 and 98.

general and unqualified terms, a little before his dissolution, that *the Spirit of the Lord spake by him,*⁷ and *his word was in his tongue.*⁸

Besides this general declaration of the sweet Psalmist of Israel concerning his own inspiration, two of the most celebrated of the New Testament writers have expressly declared, when speaking of the divine oracles, that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God,*⁹ and that *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*¹ These two passages apply to every page of those writings, which, in the time of our Saviour, came under the description of *the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms.*²

Y 3

Moreover,

⁷2 Sam. 23. 2.—Bp. Patrick observes upon this verse, that “David would not have those hymns, nor what he spake now, looked upon as human compositions; but as proceeding from a divine influence, conferred upon him by the Holy Ghost.”

⁸Bishop Chandler observes upon the last words of David: “1. That David was a prophet, and spake his psalms by the Spirit of God.

“2. That he spoke in his psalms concerning the Messiah, under his own person.—When he sings of his sufferings, his enemies, his success, his exaltation, and the like, he meant these things not so much of himself, as of the Messiah.” Defence of Christianity, p. 237.

⁹2 Tim. 3. 15.—¹2 Pet. 1. 21.

²Luke 24. 44.—“As for the penmen of the Old Testament,” says Tillotson, “we are assured that they were all inspired, by one in the New Testament, that was unquestionably so; St. Paul, who tells us, that *all scripture is given by divine inspiration*, meaning the books of the Old Testament which were called by that name by way of eminency.” Sermon 222.

See also an excellent sermon on 2 Tim. 3. 16. in the 8th vol. of Clarke, where he treats the inspiration of the Old Testament as a thing not to be questioned.

Socinus too, in his book entitled, “An Argument for the Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” insists largely on the truth of the writings of the Old Testament from the attestations of our Saviour and his Apostles in the New.—See that valuable work, passim,

Moreover; howsoever it may be with the book of psalms in general, it is certain, that the second, sixty-ninth, ninety-fifth, hundred and ninth, and hundred and tenth, are all expressly said, in the New Testament, to have been written by the direction and assistance of God and his Holy Spirit.

Thus, when the Apostles were persecuted by the rulers of the Jews, they applied the two first verses of the second psalm to their own situation at that time, and say, not that it was David who was the original and proper author of the composition, but that it was God who spake by the mouth of David: ---*And when they (the Apostles) heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?---And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*³

Here it will be observed, that the whole company of the disciples apply these words of the second psalm to their own situation---they declare them to be, not the words of David, but of God---they were, at the time of making this application, under the influence of the Holy Ghost---it follows, therefore, that David was directed and assisted by God, when he composed this prophetic psalm, in a supernatural manner.⁴

St,

³Acts 4. 24, 25, 31.

⁴“ This second psalm we Christians interpret to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and hold it to be all fulfilled in our Saviour, and the

St. Peter, quoting two passages from the psalms, the former from the 69th. and the latter from the 109th. expressly tells us, that the Holy Ghost spake them by the mouth of David.⁵

The 95th. psalm says, *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.* This passage is quoted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews and is declared to have been written by the Holy Ghost:---*Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*⁶

The 110th. psalm, our Saviour tells us, was written by the assistance of the Spirit. *What think ye of Christ?* said he to the Pharisees: *Whose son is he?* *They say unto him, The Son of David.* He saith unto them, *How then doth David in Spirit call*

“ erection of his kingdom, against all opposition, which it met with
“ from Jews, Heathens, and the Princes, and Rulers of the earth.
“ And so the holy Apostles understood it of old, Acts 4. 25—27.
“ and chap. 13. 33. Heb. 1. 5. In opposition hereto, the Jews
“ apply it wholly and solely to David himself, and will allow it no
“ other meaning either literal or typical, but what is terminated in
“ his person. But the Targum is on our side, for it interprets this
“ psalm to be a prophecy of the Messiah, as all Christians do.”

Prideaux's Connection, p. 2. b. 8. p. 583.

Dr. Priestley, however, though called a Christian, interprets it wholly of David, and will not allow it to have the smallest reference to our blessed Saviour in the manner the modern Jews now do, and in opposition both to the ancient Jews, the Apostles of Christ, and the whole Christian world. I condemn not the Doctor for thinking for himself; but I must say, he is much to be blamed for opposing the authority of the Apostles of our Lord. Their clear and decided opinions ought to be final, and absolutely binding upon every believer in Christ Jesus.

See Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 98—103.

⁵See Acts 1. 16, 20.—⁶See Heb. 3. 7, 8.

call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

The sum of these observations on the inspiration of the book of psalms is this :---1. David himself professed, near the time of his dissolution, to have written by the Spirit of the Lord.

2. St. Peter, when speaking of the Old Testament, says, *Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

3. St. Paul assures us, that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

4. Five of the psalms, namely, the 2d. 69th. 95th. 109th. and 110th. are particularly said, by the highest authority, to have been written by supernatural assistance. With what assurance then can Dr. Priestley say, that "all the psalms, without exception, appear to me to be such poetical compositions, as intelligent and pious men may well be supposed to have made, without any supernatural assistance?" But,

Again:

⁷Mat. 22. 42—44. St. Mark expresses this more clearly:—*How say the Scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.* Mark 12. 36.

Dr. Doddridge observes on this passage—"Our Lord, we see, always takes it for granted in his arguments with the Jews, that the Writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions. And I look on this as no contemptible argument for the inspiration of the New Testament; for we can never think the Apostles of Christ to have been less assisted by the Divine Spirit in their writings, when they were in other respects so much more powerfully endowed with it."

Again :---“ All the allusions in them (the psalms) “ are to transactions prior to the time in which they “ were composed, without the least reference to any “ thing that passed in after ages.”*

This is another of the Doctor's unfounded assertions, contrary to the most indisputable matter of fact, and, as was observed above, in direct opposition to the internal evidence of several of the psalms themselves. This will appear, if I mistake not, by an induction of particulars, to the full satisfaction of every impartial enquirer after truth.

1. Our Saviour himself assured his disciples, even after his resurrection from the dead, and just before his final ascent into heaven, that *all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him.*† This could not have been the case, if the Psalms contained no predictions concerning Christ.

2. The 16th. psalm is applied to our blessed Saviour by an authority that cannot be questioned, and in a manner that cannot be misunderstood, For St. Peter, *being full of the Holy Ghost*, addressed the men of Israel in the words following :---*Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know : him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified*

*Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 98.—†Luke 24. 44.

*fied and slain : whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death ; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad : moreover also ; my flesh shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day : therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ, to sit on his throne : he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.**

Here we see, that David was a prophet---that he spake concerning Christ---that he foresaw his resurrection, and prophesied concerning it---and that the Apostle applied these words of the 16th. psalm to that glorious event.

3. The 22d. psalm is applied, upon a variety of occasions, to our blessed Saviour in the New Testament. I shall however notice only one single passage :

* Acts 2. 22—32.

sage:---*They pierced my hands and my feet: I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garment among them; and cast lots upon my vesture.*² St. John applies the words to Christ in this manner:---*Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.*³

If the Doctor should say, this is only an application, and not a fulfilment, of the words of the psalm, it will be incumbent on him to declare what prior event of David's life and experience he alludes to in these declarations. If he cannot point out any particular transaction of his private or public life, to which they do apply, then he must excuse us if we consider the above declaration as absolutely erroneous, and the words of the psalm as a real prophecy, and as justly applied by St. John to the only transaction to which, perhaps, they ever were applicable, since the beginning of the world, the crucifixion and death of God's own dear and only-begotten Son. And, if this is just, here is a direct prophecy by David of our blessed Saviour, and such an one, as he could not have come to the knowledge of by any common and natural means whatever.

4. The

²Ps. 22. 16—18. — ³John 19. 23, 24.

4. The 40th. psalm is of like nature, for a part of it is applied to our great High-priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Apostle of the Gentiles:---
*Many, O my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I should declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.** This remarkable passage of the psalm is applied, in the manner following, by the great Apostle before mentioned, which application I will give in the excellent Dr. Doddridge's paraphrastic translation:---*" But in them (the Jewish sacrifices) there is of course, as it were, a yearly commemoration of sins, by a yearly presentation of the atoning blood of new sacrifices in the most holy place: which shews, that their efficacy is so far from extending, as that of the true expiation does, to all nations, times, and places, that it only looks back upon the year compleated, and hath no influence, even with regard to those persons who are actually present in the temple, on any thing future.*

" And indeed the reason of this is plain; for (it is) in the nature of things, impossible that the blood

of

“ *bulls and of goats, should, on the whole, take away*
“ *sins, or make a real atonement to God as the*
“ *great Governour of the world, for the moral*
“ *guilt of any transgression; though it may by di-*
“ *vine appointment put a stop to any farther prose-*
“ *cution which might proceed in Jewish courts, or*
“ *any such extraordinary judgment, as the peculiar*
“ *state of things among that people might other-*
“ *wise require. Therefore when the Messiah is de-*
“ *scribed in David, as making his entrance into the*
“ *world, he saith, in those well-known words, Sacri-*
“ *fice and offering thou wouldst not (accept) but a bo-*
“ *dy thou hast provided me, in which I may render*
“ *thee a more acceptable service: in whole burnt-*
“ *offerings thou hadst no complacency, when consider-*
“ *ed in this view, and in reference to this great*
“ *event. Then I said, with the most chearful con-*
“ *sent: Behold, I come; in the volume of the book, which*
“ *contains the ancient prophecies, it is written of me,*
“ *that I should accomplish this service, and I de-*
“ *light to do thy will, O my God; for thy law in all its*
“ *branches is within my heart. Having in effect*
“ *said above, As for sacrifice and offering, whether*
“ *they were burnt-offerings or sacrifices for sin, thou*
“ *didst not desire (them) or take pleasure in them,*
“ *which comprehends the most material and confi-*
“ *derable of those things which were offered to God*
“ *under the Law; then he said, Behold, I come to do*
“ *thy will, O God. So that you see, he taketh away*
“ *the first, that is, burnt-offerings and sacrifices, that*
“ *be*

“ *he may establish the second, that is, doing God’s*
 “ *will; pointing therein to that great act of obedi-*
 “ *ence, by which the pardon of sin was to be secu-*
 “ *red, and the divine honour most effectually pro-*
 “ *moted. In the execution of which will, we*
 “ *are sanctified, cleansed from our sins, and recom-*
 “ *mended to the divine acceptance, even by the*
 “ *offering up the body of our Lord Jesus Christ once*
 “ *for all, as an atoning sacrifice.*”

These remarkable verses of the psalm thus applied by the Apostle, represent David as discovering the inefficacy of the common Mosaic sacrifices, and foreseeing the advent of Jesus Christ in human form, to make atonement for the sins of the world by the sacrifice of himself: Consequently “ all the allusions
 “ in the psalms are not to transactions prior to the
 “ time in which they were composed;” nor is it true that “ they are without the least reference to
 “ any thing that passed in after ages.”

5. Is not the 72d. psalm⁶ also a direct prophecy
 of

⁶Heb. 10. 3—10.

“ This psalm the modern Jews interpret of Solomon, but
 “ Christians understand it as a prophecy of the Messiah: and the
 “ Targum is on our side herein; for it applies it to the Messiah
 “ in the same manner as we do.”

Prideaux’s Connection, p. 2. b. 8. p. 583.

Bishop Warburton justly observes, that “ the general body of the
 “ Prophecies which relate to Jesus, were, for certain great ends of
 “ Providence, so contrived as to have a *primary* accomplishment
 “ in the events of the Mosaic dispensation, and a *secondary* and final
 “ completion in the birth and ministry and sufferings of Jesus the
 “ Messiah.” Doctrine of Grace, p. 233.

See this doctrine of a secondary completion of the prophecies
 ably defended in the Divine Legation of Moses, b. 6. c. 5, 6.

Consult likewise the second of bishop Hurd’s Discourses on the
 Prophecies.

of some great and unparalleled king, who should arise after the time of David? Let the serious Reader peruse the psalm, and say whether all the expressions in it are applicable to king Solomon, or any other king that ever sat upon the throne of Israel. If there are expressions in it which never could be applied to any other than the Messiah, then Dr. Priestley's assertion, that "all the allusions in the psalms are to transactions prior to the time in which they were composed, without the least reference to any thing that passed in after ages," is without any foundation in truth, and it must appear to every sober-minded person, that his most confident declarations are not always to be depended upon.

6. The 110th. psalm is expressly applied (we have seen before that it was written by the Spirit) to the Messiah, both by our Saviour himself, and by St. Paul. But the Doctor can easily get over these, and a thousand such difficulties; for it is only saying, that "Christ was a mere man like ourselves; the son of Joseph and Mary; *capable of misapplying the scriptures of the Old Testament*; naturally fallible, peccable, weak like other men; liable to sin, as well as subject to error; that St. Paul reasons inconclusively; and that the Apostles often applied the scriptures very improperly;" and the business is done. He makes no account of such applications, but is persuaded that "David did not know any thing about the Messiah, personally
" confi-

“ considered;”⁷ and that “ we are much better situated for taking an enlarged and just view of the subject in all its connexions,”⁸ than the Apostles were. I should suppose, however, that Christ, *in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, was as well circumstanced, at least, “ for taking an enlarged and just view of the subject in all its connexions,” as Dr. Priestley; and that even the Apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost, that was promised to lead them into all the truth of the gospel covenant, were not one jot behind the very wisest of the sons of men in evangelical knowledge, and clearness of conceptions. When therefore they indisputably apply this psalm to the Messiah and the circumstances attending his mediation, I am of opinion we ought most implicitly to give them credit, even though we should have the misfortune to differ ever so widely from Dr. Priestley and his Socinian brethren. Indeed I cannot help saying, that the whole of the Doctor’s criticism upon this psalm is a very weak attempt to evade the force of a plain and important passage of the prophetic scriptures.⁹ And I appeal to any man of candour, who will be at the pains to read it, whether (if such miserable conjectures, amendments, provisos, suppositions, and the like,

⁷Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 105.

⁸Ibid. vol. 4. p. 113.

⁹See ditto. vol. 4. p. 103—113.

like, are admissible in our interpretations of holy scripture) there is not an end of all precision and certainty on religious subjects; and whether the bible, instead of being a *light to our feet and a lamp to our paths*, does not become the most vague and fallacious book that ever was imposed upon the world.

From all these considerations taken together, it follows, as clearly, in my judgment, as any thing well can do from scriptural evidence, that David wrote his psalms by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—that several of them refer to various events which took place in after ages—and that Dr. Priestley was never more mistaken than when he said, “All the psalms, without exception, appear to me to be such poetical compositions as intelligent and pious men may well be supposed to have made, without any supernatural assistance; and that all the allusions in them are to transactions prior to the time in which they were composed, without the least reference to any thing that passed in after ages.”—Let the Reader judge. I cheerfully submit the decision of the question to his determination.

Z

Again:—

“How much more just is the view which Bishop Horne hath given us of the book of psalms? “The Psalms,” says he, “are an epitome of the bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual, the ex-

Again:—"It is by no means probable that Solomon wrote any thing by inspiration." So says Dr. Priestley: but a greater than he hath said, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God;* and, in the opinion of most men, the assertion of St. Paul, where it is plain and positive, is at any time preferable to the sophistical reasonings of Dr. Priestley: for, whatever other excellencies that learned gentleman may possess, I do maintain, that he is one of the most fallacious theological writers of the present day. His abilities are very considerable; so were Voltaire's; and, I cheerfully acknowledge, I am much entertained with reading various parts of their works; but I would always be upon the utmost guard against both one and the other, on subjects where their minds are biassed in favour of any particular nostrums on political or religious subjects. The Reader will see farther the necessity of caution in the perusal of their writings in the course of these strictures.

Again:—

"plots of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and
 "captivities; their repentances and restorations; the sufferings
 "and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon;
 "the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences;
 "his incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension,
 "kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion
 "of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase,
 "and perpetuity, of the Christian church; the end of the world;
 "the general judgement; the condemnation of the wicked; and the final
 "triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King."

Commentary on the Psalms, pref. p. 1.
 2 Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 97.—32 Tim. 3. 16.

Again:—"As the ancient Israelites, and, as far as
 " appears, even the Prophets also, were left to them-
 " selves with respect to the interpretation of pro-
 " phecy, *and they accordingly fell into great mistakes* ;
 " it is natural to expect, that the Christian prophets,
 " as the Apostles may be called, should likewise
 " be left to themselves in the same respects, *and that*
 " *they should fall into like mistakes.* From this ana-
 " logy we may conclude, that they would have
 " knowledge enough for their mission, but not
 " more."³

The Prophets were enlightened to predict future
 events, to explain and inculcate the law of Moses,
 and to reprove the people for their deviations from
 it. This was their proper office. And this they

E 2

executed

³Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 121.—"The object of their mission
 " required, that the first preachers of Christianity should be infalli-
 " ble, in whatever opinions they maintained either about the nature
 " of God, or the principles of his moral government ; in whatever
 " they taught concerning the terms, or the means, of man's ac-
 " ceptance and salvation, and in the facts which they have rela-
 " ted of the Redeemer's life. If in these things they were not
 " infallible ; if any appeal lies from their assertions, to any man's
 " private opinions ; who shall draw the line, where the truth of
 " their preaching ends, and their error commences ? If their in-
 " spiration was compleat upon these subjects ; it was, to all intents
 " and purposes, *plenary*. If it gave them no light about the true
 " system of the world, the circulation of the blood, or the proper-
 " ties of the Leyden Phial ; it was not upon that account defec-
 " tive, as a religious inspiration. The distinction therefore be-
 " tween a plenary inspiration, and an inspiration extending only to
 " cases in which the object of their mission required it, is vain and
 " imaginary : and it is a mere pretence to profess a belief in the
 " one, when the other is openly denied."

Horsley's Tracts, p. 407, 408.

executed with great fidelity and zeal. Nor does it appear that they ever committed any error, in their prophetic capacity, as Dr. Priestley seems to suppose. In all other respects they were mere men, and liable to the mistakes to which other men are liable. The Apostles, in like manner, were inspired for a particular purpose. That inspiration, so far as it extended, was infallible. They were guided into all truth which concerned their office. Nor does it appear, that they ever committed the smallest error in their predictions of future events, or in their applications of Old Testament writings to the state of things under the New Testament dispensation. In every other respect, like the Prophets who preceded them, they were, like all other men, weak, fallible, and liable to mistakes of every description.

SECTION VI.

THIS same gentleman treats the New Testament no better than the Old. The Prophets, he has just told us, *committed great mistakes*, the Apostles did the same. And moreover, "I have frequently avowed myself," says he again, "not to be a believer in the inspiration of the Evangelists and Apostles, as writers: I therefore hold the subject of the miraculous conception to be one, with respect to which any person is fully at liber-

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“ty to think as the evidence shall appear to him.”
To this dangerous assertion I reply in the words of the very learned Dr. Jortin:—“How far, and in what degree, the Apostles were inspired, is not easy to determine, nor consequently necessary to be known. Thus much we may affirm, that they were assisted of God to give us a faithful account of the things which we ought to believe, and to perform, that we may attain eternal life.

“For, first, the Apostles had a promise of divine assistance upon certain occasions. *When they deliver you up*, says Christ, *take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* Whence we may reason thus—If the Apostles were to receive from the Holy Ghost a skill to speak what

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“was

“Letters to Dr. Horsley, part 1. p. 132.—“When the inspiration of the sacred writers is once deemed partial, it is easy to elude the force of any portion, or passage, which a fanciful critic may deem absurd or ill founded.”

Croft’s Sermons, p. 40.

“Nothing can be more evident, says the pious and learned Doddridge, than that a firm and cordial belief of the inspiration of the sacred scripture is of the highest moment, not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence. For if this be given up, the authority of the revelation is enervated and its use destroyed. The star which is to direct our course is clouded; our compass is broke to pieces, and we are left to make the voyage of life in sad uncertainty, amidst a thousand rocks, and shelves, and quicksands.”

See Doddridge’s Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament, in the Family Expositor, vol. 3. p. 37. Appendix.

See also the 7th. of Mr. Kett’s late excellent Sermons at the Bampton Lecture for a good account of the Inspiration of holy scripture

“ was proper when they appeared in public to defend
 “ Christianity, we may suppose that they were gui-
 “ ded by the same Spirit in their writings ; because
 “ this was of greater importance, and more worthy
 “ of the Divine interposition. By speaking justly
 “ they might confute some adversaries, preserve
 “ themselves and their religion from the contempt
 “ of their hearers, and convert and confirm that
 “ part of the assembly which had good dispositions ;
 “ whereas their writings were designed for the ser-
 “ vice, not of four or five hundred men, but of all
 “ ages and nations.

“ Secondly, Our Saviour promised his Apostles
 “ that the Holy Ghost should continually abide with
 “ them—that he should lead them into all truth—
 “ and that in particular he should bring to their
 “ remembrance whatsoever Christ had said unto
 “ them ; which will appear to have been necessary,
 “ if we consider that the gospels consist in a great
 “ measure of the discourses of Christ—that Christ
 “ conversed with them at least for three years—that
 “ they had at that time very imperfect notions of the
 “ religion which he came to teach, and of the office
 “ to which they should be appointed—and that in
 “ all probability they had not collected materials for
 “ the gospels, or set down his discourses, whilst he
 “ was with them.

“ Thirdly, Our Lord told his disciples that they
 “ were not then disposed to receive and understand
 “ some

“ some truths which the Holy Ghost should afterwards reveal to them; and the Apostles have taught us some things which are not to be found in the gospels, or are not clearly delivered there, as, the design and the abolishment of the ceremonial law, certain relative duties, and some particulars concerning the worship of God and the regulation of Christian societies or churches.

“ It is therefore a *vain* distinction which some have attempted to make between the precepts or doctrines of Christ and those of the Apostles, as if less regard were to be paid to the latter than the former. Our Saviour seems plainly to equal the Apostles to himself, as teachers, commands all men to receive them, to hear them, and to pay the same deference to them as to him.

“ Lastly, The Apostles upon several occasions affirm that they had an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Ghost; they declare that they had received their doctrines, not from men, but from Jesus Christ; and that every one who pretended to inspiration must acknowledge this, or ought to pass for an impostor, if he owned it not. They say that they had the mind of Christ; they call their doctrine the word of God and of Christ, the commandment of God and of the Lord, the wisdom of God, the wisdom which God had revealed to them by his Spirit, and words which the Holy Ghost had taught them, the testimony of God,

“ the gospel of God by which men should be
 “ judged: they assert that they are of God, that he
 “ who knoweth God heareth them, and that he who
 “ heareth them not is not of God.”¹

Again:--As our blessed Saviour was no other than a mere man, and a suffering Messiah, so his sufferings, we are told by the same authority, were of no more efficacy than the sufferings of any other good man. For, “ the circumstantial account,” says he, “ of
 “ the sufferings and death of Christ, in the 53 chapter of Isaiah, might have been the description of
 “ any other good man in the same situation, with
 “ this only difference, that the moral effects of it
 “ are represented to be more extensive.”²

And again, to the same purpose:--“ Christ being
 “ a man, who suffered and died in the best of causes,
 “ there is nothing so very different in the occasion
 “ or manner of his death, from that of others who
 “ suffered and died after him in the cause of Christi-
 “ anity, but that their sufferings and deaths may be
 “ considered in the same light with his.”³

These two assertions are extremely erroneous, and subversive of the great design of the Divine Being in reconciling the world unto himself by the death

¹Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p 212—216.

²Theological Repository, vol. 1. p. 129.

³Ibid. p. 39.—N. B. Though Dr. Priestley is the Editor of this work, I cannot positively say whether he is the author of these two assertions.

death of his Son. How much more justly does Lord Bacon speak, when he says, "Jesus, the Lord, became in the flesh a sacrificer, and sacrifice for sin; a satisfaction and price to the justice of God; a meriter of glory and the kingdom.—The sufferings and merits of Christ are sufficient to do away the sins of the whole world."

Can the same be said of the sufferings of any mere man?

The celebrated Dr. Blair also, when speaking of our Saviour's dying hour, says, "This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour when that great sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from an high altar, the blood was flowing, which washed away the guilt of the nations.

"This awful dispensation of the Almighty contains mysteries which are beyond the discovery of man. It is one of those things into which the angels desire to look. What has been revealed to us, is, That the death of Christ was the interposition of heaven for preventing the ruin of human kind. We know, that under the government of God, misery is the natural consequence

" of

Confession of Faith.

“ of guilt. After rational creatures had, by their
 “ criminal conduct, introduced disorder into the Di-
 “ vine kingdom, there was no ground to believe,
 “ that by their penitence and prayers alone they
 “ could prevent the destruction which threatened
 “ them. The prevalence of propitiatory sacrifi-
 “ ces throughout the earth, proclaims it to be the
 “ general sense of mankind, that mere repentance
 “ was not of sufficient avail to expiate sin, or to
 “ stop its penal effects. By the constant allusions
 “ which are carried on in the New Testament to
 “ the sacrifices under the Law, as pre-signifying a
 “ great atonement made by Christ; and by the
 “ strong expressions which are used in describing
 “ the effects of his death, the sacred writers shew,
 “ as plainly as language allows, that there was an
 “ efficacy in his sufferings, far beyond that of mere
 “ example and instruction.”⁹—

Again :—“ So strange and incredible does your
 “ hypothesis

⁹Sermons, vol. 1. p. 121, 122.—The Reader will be much edified by consulting the whole of this very excellent sermon. Indeed all Blair's Sermons are peculiarly elegant and instructive. One cannot help wishing they were in the hand of every man of an improved mind.—In answer to all that Dr. Priestley says against the atonement for sin made by the death of Christ see also Berry-Street Sermons, p. 263—276.—Consult likewise Archbishop Tillotson's 47th. and 228th. Sermons—Bishop Browne's Sermons, the whole first volume—Bishop Conybeare's 4th. Sermon, entitled, “ The Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction agreeable with Reason”—and Bishop Butler's Analogy, part 2. chap. 5.—Dr. Priestley may cavil with such Authors, as indeed he does with every one who maintains the proper dignity of Christ, but he can no more *solidly* answer them than he can change the nature of truth itself.

“ hypothesis (the pre-existence of Christ) appear to
 “ me, that rather than admit it, I would suppose
 “ the whole verse (John 6. 32. *What and if ye*
 “ *shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was be-*
 “ *fore?*) to be an interpolation, or that the *old Apostle*
 “ dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote
 “ another.”

Serious Reader! I appeal to thy judgment:
 What could that arch-infidel Voltaire have said
 more sneeringly, to degrade the word of God, and
 to render it contemptible in the eyes of the nations,
 than is here asserted by this sophistical Divine?
 What authority, or what appearance of authority,
 has he for so disingenuous an insinuation? Surely the
 cause of Socinianism is desperate, if it needs arts like
 these for its support.

Again:—

Letters to Dr. Price, p. 58, in his Defences of Unitarianism
 for the year 1787—Dr. Whitby observes, when speaking of slips
 and mistakes—“ I can by no means grant any slips of memory in
 “ the Compilers of these sacred books of the New Testament; for
 “ though these are allowed by some in matters of small consequence,
 “ as they are pleased to stile them: yet is it of great consequence
 “ that we do not own them: for, if you grant that they have
 “ thus slipt at all, by what rules can we be assured they have not
 “ slipt above an hundred times, or even in most of their historical
 “ relations?—If one of those sacred writers might be subject to
 “ these slips, why not all? If once, why not often? And can we
 “ think it no prejudice to the divine authority of these sacred
 “ writings, that they should so often be subject to false
 “ citations, and produce false stories, contradicting the truth
 “ of the Old Testament? Would not this yield a great advantage
 “ against our rule of faith, both to the unbelieving Jews, and to the
 “ Sceptics, and Antiscripturists, which too much abound among
 “ us?”

General Preface concerning the Divine authority of the scrip-
 tures of the New Testament, p. 6. which the Reader would do
 well to consult in defence of the inspiration of those inestimable
 writings.

Again:—"As it is not pretended, that there are
 " any miracles adapted to prove that Christ made
 " and supports the world, I do not see, that we are
 " under any obligation to believe it, *merely because*
 " *it was an opinion held by an Apostle.*"²

If the word of God plainly informs us, that Christ created and supports the universe, we can have no higher and better authority. Thus saith St. John, and thus saith St. Paul, are the best authority in the world. And serious men will infinitely sooner give credit to their simple declarations, than to all the flimsy arguments of Dr. Priestley.

I will add here an objection to the inspiration of the New Testament, and the answer given by the learned Michaelis:—"It has been objected," says this very able Scholar, "that though the doctrines
 " are divine, it does not follow, that the writings of
 " the Apostles and Evangelists are so; that these
 " no where pretend to a divine inspiration, which
 " they ought, if we are bound to receive them as
 " divine."

"I might answer to this," says he, "that the
 " Prophets promised a more perfect revelation of the
 " will of God under the New Testament, than that
 " under the Old; and that therefore it may be presum-
 " ed some new inspired writings were necessary; that
 " the

²History of Early Opinions, vol. i. p. 63.—See an able defence of the Apostles and their writings in Dr. Whitby's General Preface concerning the divine authority of the Epistles of the N. T. in the beginning of his Commentary.

“ the doctrine of the gospel supersedes the law of
“ Moses, which being contained and delivered in
“ inspired writings, couldnot be abolished by writings
“ uninspired; and that the words of the great
“ prophet Jesus Christ, which are so much more excellent
“ than all the words delivered by all the Prophets, were
“ worthy to be recorded, in a manner the most
“ unexceptionably credible.

“ But the reflection which most satisfies me, is
“ this; most of the writers of the New Testament,
“ Matthew, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude,
“ were Apostles, that is, of the number of those to
“ whom Christ had, in the clearest manner, promised
“ a divine inspiration, merely as preachers of the gospel,
“ which was to extend, not to the matter only,
“ but even to the words. Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11.
“ Luke xii. 11. xxi. 15. Now their writings, upon
“ which the church of Christ was to be built, being
“ of much more importance than their sermons, it is
“ highly probable that they were no less assisted by
“ the Holy Ghost in writing, than in speaking.

“ If, besides, we consider, that the Apostles prefer
“ themselves to the Prophets, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph.
“ iv. 11. and are justified in so doing by the declaration
“ of Christ, Mat. xi. 9—11. they seem in fact
“ to claim a divine inspiration, whenever they stile
“ themselves at the beginning of their epistles, an
“ Apostle of Jesus Christ, and thereby declare those
“ epistles to be authoritative. We may apply to them
“ what Aben-Ezra says of the man of God, in Deut.

“ xxxiii.

“ xxxiii. 1. He adds this, in order to shew that he
 “ blessed them as a Prophet.

“ But besides all this, it must be mentioned, that
 “ St. Paul in 1 Cor. ii. 10. 12. 13. 16. and Gal. 1.
 “ 12. doth expressly pretend to a divine inspira-
 “ tion.”³—

But to proceed with the Doctor:—“ It is not, cer-
 “ tainly, from a few casual expressions, which so easily
 “ admit of other interpretations, and especially in
 “ epistolary writings, that we can be authorised to
 “ infer, that such was the serious opinion of the A-
 “ postles. But if it had been their real opinion, it
 “ would not follow, that it was true, unless the
 “ teaching of it should appear to be included in their
 “ general commission, with which, as I have shewn,
 “ it has no sort of connection.”⁴

When by fair and candid interpretation we can
 clearly ascertain what were the real opinions of all,
 or even of any one of the Apostles, on subjects con-
 nected with the doctrine of salvation, sober men
 will not hesitate whether they should submit their
 understandings to such authority, or bewilder them-
 selves in the endless mazes of Dr. Priestley's volumi-
 nous and sophistical writings. No man living has
 a right to reject the opinions of the Apostles on any
 religious

³Introductory Lect. to the N. T. sect. 4.

⁴History of Early Opinions p. 70.—Bishop Watson observes, that
 “ the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament, are so in-
 “ timately united with the narration of common events, and the
 “ ordinary transactions of life, that you cannot, as in profane histo-
 “ ry, separate the one from the other.”

Apology for Christianity, p. 280.

religious subject whatever, until he can shew superior authority. Baron Swedenborg indeed has done it without any authority, but that of a disordered imagination. He has both added to and taken from the word of God. Dr. Priestley does the same, whenever the opinions of the sacred writers appear to oppose the system he has espoused. But modest men will be careful, lest they should transgress the solemn injunction of Moses—*What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*—and incur that fearful doom of another of the sacred books—*If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

Again:—"I do not believe the miraculous conception of Jesus, but am of opinion, that he was the legitimate son of Joseph." Ignatius, however, the disciple of St. John, says, "that our God Jesus Christ, was, according to the dispensation of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the Holy Ghost."

Dr. Priestley rejects wholly the two first chapters of St. Matthew's gospel, and the two first chapters of St. Luke's. All this, however, is done upon no good and respectable authority. To me it is almost demonstrably

⁵Letters to the Jews, p. 1. p. 41.—⁶Epist. to the Ep. sect. 18.

monstrably certain, that these four chapters made an original part of the two gospels in question, from this single circumstance, that one part of the ancient Ebionites believed the miraculous conception, though the other did not. Whence should their evidence for such an opinion arise, but from the four chapters in these two gospels? From this one circumstance, I say, it appears evident to me, that these chapters, objected to by Dr. Priestley, made an original part of the holy scriptures; and the above positive testimony of Ignatius is no small confirmation of this supposition.

The late Dr. Johnson used to say of Dr. Priestley's writings, and it should seem with great truth, that they were calculated to unsettle every thing, and to settle nothing. And even Mr. Gibbon, in his history, remarks, when speaking of the same writings, "that the pillars of revelation are shaken by those
" men, who preserve the name without the substance
" of religion, who indulge the licence without the
" temper of philosophy."

Again:—"I think it is hardly possible to read
" these passages (*quotations from several of the Fa-*
" *thers*) in which the inconveniences that would
" have attended the discovery of the miraculous
" conception are very strongly and naturally def-
" cribed, without feeling that the story itself is an
" *incumbrance*

¹Gibbon's History, vol. 5. p. 540. 4to. edition.

“ *incumbrance on the Christian scheme*, and that it
 “ would at least have appeared to more advantage
 “ without it.”*

Mr. Veyfie observes upon this declaration of the
 learned Doctor—“ Whether the miraculous con-
 “ ception be an incumbrance on the Christian
 “ scheme, is another question: it is certainly a
 “ great incumbrance on the scheme of our modern
 “ Unitarians. For if, as they affirm, Christ was a
 “ mere man, naturally possessed of no other powers
 “ than other men have, what reason can possibly be
 “ assigned, why he should not have been conceived
 “ and born like other men? On the other hand, if
 “ we admit the doctrine in question, and allow that
 “ Christ was miraculously conceived, and born in
 “ an unusual manner, who is there, whom this cir-
 “ cumstance does not lead to suspect, I had almost
 “ said, does not persuade, that his nature must be
 “ superior to that of man? It is not therefore with-
 “ out reason, that the advocates of the simple huma-
 “ nity endeavour to remove from the Christian
 “ creed a doctrine so hostile to their principal posi-
 “ tion. In the mean while the orthodox believer
 “ is not displeased to find, that this bold measure is
 “ attempted by means, not likely to make many
 “ converts, viz. partly by asserting the fallibility of
 “ the holy Evangelists, who relate the fact; and

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“ partly

*History of Early Opinions, vol. 4. p. 50.

“ partly by denying the authenticity of the writings,
 “ which contain the relation.”³

Again:—As to St. Luke’s account of the miraculous conception, “ I have shewn that it abounds
 “ with the most manifest improbabilities.”²—Serious men will be at no loss to judge between St. Luke and Dr. Priestley. The arguments adduced against the eloquent Evangelist are mere sophistry, such as Dr. Priestley himself would thoroughly despise in an antagonist of his own.

The learned Bishop of St. David’s has an excellent sermon upon the miraculous conception, which should be read in answer to all these confident assertions of Dr. Priestley. I will lay before the Reader a short extract from it on the evidence of the doctrine. “ We have,” says his Lordship, “ for the
 “ miraculous conception the express testimony of
 “ two out of the four Evangelists: of St. Matthew, whose gospel was published in Judea within
 “ in a few years after our Lord’s ascension; and of
 “ St. Luke, whose narrative was composed, as may
 “ be collected from the author’s short preface, to
 “ prevent the mischief that was to be apprehended
 “ from some pretended histories of our Saviour’s
 “ life, in which the truth was probably blended with
 “ many

³Sermon, proving the Doctrine of St. John, and the Faith of the first Christians, not Unitarian, p. 4.

²Letters to the Jews, p. 2. p. 10.

“ many legendary tales. It is very remarkable,
“ that the fact of the miraculous conception should
“ be found in the first of the four gospels; written at
“ a time when many of the near relations of the ho-
“ ly family must have been living, by whom the
“ story, had it been false, had been easily confuted:
“ that it should be found again in St. Luke’s gospel;
“ written for the peculiar use of the converted Gen-
“ tiles, and for the express purpose of furnishing a
“ summary of authentic facts, and of suppressing
“ spurious narrations. Was it not ordered by some
“ peculiar providence of God, that the two great
“ branches of the primitive church; the Hebrew
“ congregations, for which St. Matthew wrote, and
“ the Greek congregations, for which St. Luke
“ wrote; should find an express record of the mi-
“ raculous conception each in its proper gospel?”*

Again:—“ We can satisfy ourselves and others
“ with saying that the Apostles applied the scrip-
“ tures according to the best of their judgment,
“ which would of course (without any particular
“ illumination, which does not appear to have
“ been necessary in their case) be biased by the
“ mode of applying them prevalent in their age
“ and country; and that consequently we are at li-
“ berty to judge of the propriety of all their quotati-
“ ons,

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*See more to the same purpose in his Lordship’s Tracts, p. 326.

“ ons, as well as of those made by persons now
“ living.”⁴

Again:—“ As to the Apostles there will perhaps
“ be no difficulty in admitting, that the great ob-
“ ject

⁴Theological Repository, vol. 4. p. 23.—I cannot help wishing that the Reader, who is desirous of information on the subject of the New Testament quotations from the Old, would be at the trouble of consulting with care the second, third, and fourth chapters of Allix’s Judgment of the Jewish Church. If he is a stranger to that excellent and decisive book, he will probably meet with some information and satisfaction.

See also Michaelis’ Lectures on the New Testament, sect. 11. —Consult likewise the very learned Dr. Randolph’s “ Prophecies and other Texts cited in the New Testament, compared with the original Hebrew and the Septuagint.”—See moreover Dr. Henry Owen’s “ Modes of Quotation used by the Evangelical Writers explained and vindicated.”

We have an epitome of this learned and excellent work drawn by the Author himself, which I will here lay before the Reader.—
“ Of all that has been said this is the sum—That Jesus Christ,
“ whose history we read in the New Testament, was the true Mes-
“ siah predicted in the Old—that this is manifestly confirmed and
“ ascertained by the exact completion of the several prophecies
“ that went before concerning him—that if some of the prophecies
“ were anciently, by the Jews, either interpreted of, or applied to,
“ other persons and times than those of the Messiah, yet is the
“ sense given them by Christ and his Apostles highly to be prefer-
“ red; for the Jews easily might, and indeed evidently did, mis-
“ take the sense of *many* prophecies, which foretold events that
“ were long after to happen; but it was impossible that Christ and
“ his Apostles should ever err in the true meaning of *any one*, as
“ they were really endued with supernatural powers, and guided
“ by the influence of that Spirit, which searcheth and knoweth all
“ things, even the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2. 10. Their
“ power of working miracles plainly proved that God was with
“ them, and *inspired* as well as strengthened them. Their *inspi-*
“ *ration* again as plainly proved, that their interpretation of the
“ prophecies was certain and infallible: not to insist, as a further
“ proof, on their being all throughout punctually accomplished
“ according to the very sense in which they interpreted them.”
Page 109.

“ject of their mission did not require any particular illumination with respect to the knowledge of the scriptures; and therefore that they would be naturally influenced by the mode of interpretation, which was generally adopted by their countrymen.”⁵

And again:—“It is evident that the Apostles often applied the scriptures very improperly, and with no better judgment than their unbelieving countrymen.”⁶

By these declarations the authority of the whole New Testament is sapped to its lowest foundations! In vain does this over-zealous Divine write upon the evidences of Christianity, in vain make his boast

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of

⁵Theolog. Repos. vol. 4. p. 112.—This assertion of the Doctor is in direct opposition to Luke 24. 45, and 2 Cor. 3. 14—16.

⁶Ibid. p. 442.—One cannot wonder the learned Doctor treats the holy scriptures with this unpardonable freedom. He well knows the bible, as we now have it, and Socinianism, can never stand together. And therefore while, at one time, he professes great regard to the sacred volume, at another he gives it a fly stab, rejects its authority, and selects only such parts as seem to favour his own hypothesis. “For,” as Dr. Harwood observes, “we must have new scriptures, and a new revelation to prove and establish Socinianism: for I am persuaded,” continues he, “it will never be satisfactorily demonstrated from the present sacred volume.”

Socinian Scheme, p. 29.

It appears from the above quotations, that Dr. Priestley considers the Scripture as being full of blunders. Mr. Locke tells us, however, “It is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting.” And the celebrated French poet Boileau says, that “every word and syllable of the bible ought to be adored.” Let the serious Reader judge, whether of these opinions is most worthy of a book, which professes to have been written by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit, for the instruction and salvation of mankind.

of being a believer, in vain attempt to convert Jews and infidels, while he treats the bible with such manifest impropriety. What he builds up with one hand he pulls down with the other. I would charitably hope he has good intentions. He says he has, and I will give him full credit for the assertion. How far these intentions may excuse him in the sight of the All-Seeing, is not with us to determine. There can, however, be no doubt concerning the pernicious tendency of the above, and such like declarations. If Dr. Priestley has a right to reject one part of the word of God, I have an equal right to reject another, and every man living is set at liberty from all scriptural restraint whatever. The Deists themselves do not reject the whole bible, but only such parts as they judge not agreeable to their system.⁷

Again:—

⁷The Socinians are so determined against the divinity of our blessed Saviour, that, rather than admit the doctrine, several of them will reject some of the most material parts of the New Testament itself. Dr. Priestley has not yet told us, I think, how much he receives, and how much he cashiers. From the above quotations, however, it is very manifest, that he treats the whole with great impropriety. The ancient Ebionites, we are told, rejected three of the gospels, and all St. Paul's epistles entirely, and the two first chapters of St. Matthew's gospel. Nay even the part of St. Matthew's gospel which they did retain, was not that which we now have, but only a spurious one. The Ebionites, or Socinians, of modern times, have trodden likewise in many of their footsteps. For the author of the Judgment of the Fathers, &c. rejects all the writings of St. John, both the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Revelation. He rejects likewise a good part of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and supposes the form of baptism in the 28 chapter of Matthew is interpolated. Men that will assert so boldly, without the shadow of a proof, it must be confessed, have the ad-

Again:—" I think I have shewn, that *the Apostle Paul often reasons inconclusively*, and therefore that " he wrote as any other person, of his turn of mind " and thinking, and in his situation, would have " written, without any particular inspiration."

Again:—" The Apostle Paul, especially if he be " the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, *has strained very much, by the force of imagination*, to " reconcile the Jews to the christian religion, by " pointing out the *analogies* which *he imagined* the " rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion bore " to something in Christianity?"

A a 4

Again:—

vantage of others. They enjoy the exalted privilege of rejecting any thing, and establishing any thing, which may be agreeable to themselves, without controul. It is only saying such a book is spurious, and such a passage is interpolated, and the point in hand, be it what it may, is established or rejected. Indeed, no principles can stand before such excessive and impudent liberties.

See Bishop Bull's Discourse on the catholic doctrine concerning the blessed Trinity, vol. 3. p. 843—854.

³History of Corruptions, vol. 2. p. 370.

⁹Ibid. vol. 1. p. 24.—To writers like Dr. Priestley, who seems to be utterly careless about the consequences which his writings may produce, it will not be amiss to recommend the observations of the celebrated Dr. Clarke:—" A free and impartial inquiry after " truth," says this great man, " wherever it is to be found, is indeed a noble and most commendable disposition: a disposition " which every man ought himself to labour after, and to the utmost of his power encourage in all others. It is the great foundation of all useful knowledge, of all true virtue, and of all sincere religion. But when a man, in his searches into the nature " of things, finds his enquiries leading him towards such notions " as, if they should prove true, would manifestly subvert the very " essences of good and evil, the least that a sober-minded man can " in such a case possibly be supposed to owe to God, to virtue, to the dignity of a rational nature, is, that he ought to be in the

Again:—"Notwithstanding the frequent mention
 " that is made of the love of God in the gift of his
 " Son by the Apostles, it is never said to undo any
 " thing that had been done at the fall, some passa-
 " ges of Paul alone excepted, who calls Christ, the
 " last Adam, and makes use of terms, which im-
 " ply, that death was introduced by Adam, as eter-
 " nal life is the gift of God by Christ. But you
 " know, that *the writings of this Apostle abound with*
 " *analogies and antitheses, on which no very serious*
 " *strefs can be laid.*"

When any expressions occur in the works of this great man and inspired Apostle, which oppose his favourite notions, Dr. Priestley easily gets over them by saying, "These are not in any historical work, but only *incidental expressions in the Epistles of St. Paul.*"

The

"highest degree fearful and suspicious of himself, lest he be led
 " away by any prejudice, lest he be deceived by any erroneous ar-
 " gument, lest he suffer himself to be imposed on by any wrong
 " inclination. Too great an assurance in arguments of this nature,
 " even though they seemed at present to be demonstrations, re-
 " joicing in the strength of them and taking pleasure in the carry-
 " ing of such a cause, is what a good mind can never be capable
 " of. To such a person, the finding his own arguments unan-
 " swerable would be the greatest grief; triumphing in so melan-
 " choly a field would be the highest dissatisfaction; and nothing
 " could afford so pleasing, so agreeable a disappointment as to find
 " his own reasonings shewn to be inconclusive."

Remarks on a philosophical Enquiry concerning human liberty, p. 45.

¹ Letters to Dr. Price, p. 159.

² Ibid. p. 118.—See an able defence of the Epistles of the New Testament in Dr. Whitby's General Preface prefixed to his Commentary.

The next censure seems to include all the Apostles, as though they and the primitive Fathers had colloqued

That the Apostles in general, and St. Paul in particular, spake and wrote by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, after the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, is manifest from Mat. 10. 40... Ibid. 28. 19, 20... Luke 10. 16... Ibid. 24. 48, 49... John 8. 46, 47. ... Ibid. 12. 48... Ibid. 14. 12, 13, 16, 17, 26... Ibid. 16. 13, 14, 15... Acts. 2. 4... Rom. 2. 16... Ibid. 10. 14... 17... Ibid. 15. 16... Ibid. 16. 25, 26... 1 Cor. 1. 1... Ibid. 1. 24... Ibid. 2. 1. ... Ibid. 2. 6... Ibid. 14. 37... 2 Cor. 1. 1... Ibid. 2. 12... Ibid. 11. 7... Ibid. 13. 3... Gal. 1. 8... 12... Ibid. 4. 14... Ep. 1. 1... Ibid. 1. 9... Col. 1. 1... Ibid. 1. 25... Ibid. 2. 2... Ibid. 3. 16... Phil. 4. 9... 1 Thes. 1. 5... Ibid. 2. 2, 8, 9... Ibid. 2. 4. ... Ibid. 2. 13... Ibid. 3. 2... Ibid. 4. 2... Ibid. 4. 8... Ibid. 4. 15... 2 Thes. 2. 15... 1 Tim. 1. 1... Ibid. 1. 10... 2 Tim. 1. 1. ... Ibid. 1. 13, 14... 1 Pet. 1. 12... 2 Pet. 3. 2... Ibid. 3. 15, 16. ... 1 John 4. 6.

All these declarations of Christ and his Apostles, are either true or they are false. If they are true, the Apostles in general, and St. Paul in particular, spake and wrote, at all times (after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them, but when they declared the contrary) by divine aid and inspiration. If these declarations are false, St. Paul especially, and the Apostles in general, were impostors and deceivers. Let Dr. Priestley take which side of the dilemma he pleases.

But should we for a moment suppose, that St. Paul did not write by the special guidance of the Spirit, it will not therefore follow, that his arguments should be less just and conclusive than the arguments of Dr. Priestley, *his new antagonist*. The Apostle appears to have been, independent of inspiration, at least, speaking moderately, a man of as large a size as the Doctor can pretend to be. "He had a vigorous and comprehensive mind. He was acquainted with all the comments and all the refinements upon the law. He was conversant with the Grecian poets and with the Grecian customs; he understood their philosophy. He was not liable to the charge of credulity, for his prejudices had turned the contrary way. Under such circumstances a sober minded critic would not hastily charge him with error and sophistry, with a misconstruction of prophecies, or an improper application of them. Much less would he suppose that an epistle, which is to be considered as the model of our argumentation with the Jews, should be so figurative as to have types without antitypes, shadows without corresponding substance, mentioning sacrifices

colloqued together to obscure and disguise the pure religion of Jesus Christ. "However," says he,
" the

" without any solid meaning, but to beguile rooted prepossession
" into compliance, and reducing the Saviour of the world to the
" quality of a mere martyr and a mere man."

Croft's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, p. 53.

" If the Apostles were not inspired with the knowledge of the
" facts recorded by them," says a sensible writer, " then Luke and
" Mark, who were not immediately the disciples of Jesus Christ,
" as they received their information at second hand, it is possible
" might be deceived; consequently, little dependence is to be put
" upon those things which they relate, of which the other Evange-
" lists take no notice. Besides, if they, and the authors of the
" Epistles were fallible, their doctrinal writings can never be confi-
" dered as binding the faith of Christians; because every one who
" finds his particular evil way or opinion condemned by an aposto-
" lical rule or precept will directly impeach the sacred author's
" authority in that particular instance, or question the truth of his
" being inspired at the time of his delivering it: thus the whole,
" or the major part of the New Testament will be rejected by va-
" rious men, in compliance with their own humours, as weak, un-
" authorative, and defective in argument."

These observations are awfully true. Many of Dr. Priestley's greatest admirers, to my certain knowledge, treat the bible with the utmost impropriety. Though, like the Doctor, they pretend to believe it, yet press them closely in argument, and they will immediately deny its divine authority. Nor has the Doctor any just cause to be offended with me for saying he only *pretends* to believe the bible. The above quotations from his own works, in my opinion, fully justify the imputation. He acknowledges he does not believe some things in it. He considers both the Old and New Testament as abounding with error. Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, were all mistaken. He no where tells us, that I recollect, what parts in particular of the word of God he does believe. We are therefore at liberty to charge him with a general disbelief of it. If indeed to believe that Christ was the Messiah is all that is meant by believing the bible, we must do Dr. Priestley the justice to acknowledge that he avows this in the most explicit terms. But then he says we must expect another of a description quite different, which seems utterly inconsistent with his former avowal. This is good news for the poor Jews, at least. I rather wonder they do not all flock to his standard, and become universal converts to a doctrine so palatable to flesh and blood. And yet it does not appear, that

“ the *disguise* in which this simple religion appears,
 “ as delivered to us through the hands of the Apos-
 “ tles and primitive Fathers, is not so close, but
 “ that, with proper attention, we are able to look
 “ *through it*, and discern its true lineaments.”³

In

either he, or the Socinians of the sixteenth century, have made any considerable number of converts from the race of Abraham.

The ancient Jews pretended to believe the writings of Moses, and were much displeased with those who called their faith in question; but our Saviour charges them with infidelity, notwithstanding all their pretensions to the contrary. See John 5. 39—47. To his own Master, however, Dr. Priestley stands or falls. We have no right to judge of any man's motives, any farther than he avows them. We are not equal to the task; Christ was. He might therefore pronounce upon them with propriety; we cannot. And with respect to the final fates of men, we are equally incapable of determining. *We shall all stand before his judgement seat, and receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad.* What allowances will be made for my errors, or for the errors of Dr. Priestley, at that awful time, I know not. I have no doubt, however, but every allowance will be granted that we can reasonably desire. Dr. Priestley thinks we are idolatrous for paying divine honour unto Jesus: we think he rejects the only foundation of our redemption. The Lord judge between us. I wish the Doctor as well as I do my own soul. I believe him to be in a dangerous error. I have made free to tell him so; and, as far as my influence goes, I have endeavoured to caution my fellow creatures against the poison of his opinions. The Doctor will pardon me for so doing. He himself is acting in the same manner. God grant we may both find mercy of the Lord in the day of his appearing.

³Theological Repository, vol. 1. p. 428.—“ We have the
 “ clearest display of Christianity in the Epistles of the New Testa-
 “ ment, every thing necessary to complete the system of divine re-
 “ velation being finished when the inspired penmen composed these
 “ parts of holy writ. All that our Lord thought fit to leave unsaid
 “ had been revealed to the Apostles by his Spirit, as he had pro-
 “ mised. His death, and resurrection, with the subsequent events,
 “ had dispelled all darkness from the minds of the disciples. They
 “ now saw clearly the fulfilment of the Old Testament types and
 “ prophecies concerning the Messiah, and were no longer in doubt
 “ with regard to his character and offices. In the epistolary part
 “ of the New Testament, therefore, we have declared unto us the

SECTION VII.

IN all these strange and unfounded assertions, Dr. Priestley seems to have trodden in the footsteps of his predecessors in the same cause. Socinus, for instance, the father of the present unitarians, declares, that “ though the doctrine (of the atonement and satisfaction of Christ) were found, not only *once*, “ but *frequently written* in the holy scriptures; * I, “ indeed,

“ whole counsel of God, and herein it is asserted, with the greatest precision, that our justification does not flow solely from the goodness of the Father, without any other medium than our repentance and reformation; but that mercy is extended to repenting and believing sinners through the Son, and that they only are entitled to salvation who come unto God through him.”—How much more just, and honourable for the word of God, are these sentiments, than the strange assertions of the Doctor? He talks of “ disguises,” as though the New Testament were delivered in types and shadows as well as the Old; whereas the veil is now taken away, and *we all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord*. See an excellent little pamphlet upon the atonement written by Mr. William Key, Surgeon, of Leeds, in answer to Dr. Priestley and Mr. Graham, page 82.

* If liberties of this kind are to be granted, it is of very little consequence what information the scriptures contain. Such men do not properly interpret the word of God; they make a new religion.

Dr. Priestley says, that the charge which has been brought against him of *undervaluing and rejecting the authority of the scriptures* is “ contrary to fact and all appearance of fact,” and calls it “ a gross and unfounded calumny.” See Letters to Mr. Burn, p. 3.

How far this declaration of the learned Doctor can be made consistent with all the above degrading sentiments concerning the holy scriptures I leave the Reader to determine.

A late pious and celebrated Author says, “ It would be excusable, if these menders of the bible would offer their hypothesis modestly. But one cannot excuse them, when they not only obtrude “ their novel scheme with the utmost confidence, but even ridicule “ that scriptural one, which always was, and is now held by men

“ indeed, would not therefore believe it to be en-
“ tirely as you suppose. Though the divine ora-
“ cles may attest things to be so, in appearance ;
“ yet they cannot, by any means, be admitted, be-
“ cause they are very evidently impossible: and,
“ therefore, the sacred words are sometimes ex-
“ plained, even by unusual tropes, to a sense differ-
“ ent from their literal signification.”⁵

Again:—“ Should there be found some places
“ of scripture, where it should be expressly
“ written, that God was made man, or did assume
“ human flesh; they should not presently be taken
“ according as the words found, since that is alto-
“ gether repugnant to the Divine Majesty; but
“ would require to be expounded in such manner,
“ as by figures not utterly unusual in speech a fit-
“ ter meaning might appear to us.”⁶

Again:—“ If not once only, but often, it should
“ be written in the sacred scriptures, that Christ
“ made satisfaction to God for sins; I would not
“ therefore believe, that the matter is so, as you
“ imagine.”⁷

Again:—

“ of the greatest learning and piety in the world. Hereby they
“ promote the cause of infidelity more effectually, than either
“ Hume or Voltaire.”

Wesley's Journals, No. 16. p. 115

⁵De Salvatore, part 3. chap. 6.

⁶Socin. Disput. de Jesu Christo, Operum Tom. 1. p. 714.

⁷Idem de Satisf. p. 3. c. 6. p. 204.

Again:—"Any, the greatest force is to be used
 "with words, rather than take them in the obvi-
 "ous sense."^s

These four declarations of Socinus are such as to render all revelation vague and indecisive to the last degree. It shall be any thing or nothing as suits the interpreter. Besides, he takes for granted what is to be proved. How does he know that a Divine Person cannot assume human flesh? Who told him so? It is certain, the whole Heathen world was of a different opinion. Did not all the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome take on them at times the human form for various purposes? Have not angels in all ages done the same? How does Socinus know then, that the true Son of God may not unite himself in some such way as the former are said to have done, and as the latter certainly have? And how can he tell that this Divine Person might not by his sufferings and death make a real and proper atonement to his great Father for the sins of the world? It is certain the scripture *seems* to favour both these doctrines: many men, as learned and as pious as he was, have been of this opinion: such peremptoriness therefore ill becomes this gentleman. Expressions less positive would have been more seemly. He comes not to the bible to learn his religion, but he brings his scheme of things to the

^sSecond Epist. to Balcerimicus, Operum, tom. 1. p. 425.

the bible, and then he twists, and turns, and winds it to his own preconceived system. This is directly opposite to what is right. A conduct the very reverse would be infinitely proper.

And again :—" The precepts of the Old Testament are for the most part such, that it is hard to believe they proceed from God, they are either so light, or vain, or superstitious, or even foolish and ridiculous; and, in short, they seem not to be worthy of God."

Well done, master Socinus! This is a coup de main. What could Voltaire, that hoary infidel; or what could the devil himself, that enemy of righteousness, and father of lies, say more effectually to subvert the whole system of the Jewish and Christian revelations? If this is Socinianism,^a *my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!*

The

^aSecond Epist. to Dudith.

^aA writer of this description in the last century, with whose name I am not acquainted, tells his readers, that several of the writings which go under the denomination of Scripture, are mere "fiction and romance, and pieces of wit and fancy:" that other things in the bible are writ "with excessive cholor, and impatience, and unworthy, not only of a pious man, but even of an honest and wise heathen."

These are the accounts this Socinian writer gives us of the bible. It is well known however, that "the whole Christian and Jewish church time out of mind have looked upon the books contained in the Jewish canon to be inspired, and have, upon all occasions, appealed to their authority as such."

See Lowth on the Inspiration of the Old and New Testament, p. 185 and 248, a work that obviates most of the cavils of Dr. Priestley, and other authors of a similar complexion.

The same gentleman denies also, that God can certainly foresee free and contingent actions. "Since no reason," says he, "can be assigned, and no place of holy scripture can be produced from whence it can be clearly collected, that God knew all things which come to pass before they do take place, we ought to conclude, that such foreknowledge of God ought not to be asserted by us; especially, since there are reasons not a few to be adduced, and some testimonies of scripture are not wanting, which plainly deny any such foreknowledge."

Schlichtingius

*Bishop Watson observes upon this notion, that "we ought to mistrust the extent of our capacities, and to acknowledge, that foresight appertains to God, and freedom to man, though we cannot, in any wise, comprehend the possibility of their existence."

Mr. Locke, speaking on the same subject, says, "I own freely to you the weakness of my understanding, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God our Maker, and I cannot have a clearer perception of any thing than that I am free; yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truths I most firmly assent to. And therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question, resolving all into this short conclusion; that if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it."

See Bishop Watson's Sermons and Tracts, p. 142.

Consult also Clarke's Discourse on the Being and Attributes of God, p. 95.

Dr. Bentley too, a man whose penetration few will be inclined to call in question, delivers as his decided opinion, that "God can foresee contingencies, the free resolves of rational agents, as well as the most necessary events in the material and inanimate world: but the divine prescience does not superadd nor imply a fatal necessity."—Sermons, p. 393.

Schlichtingius also, another author of the Socinian persuasion, speaking of the energy of divine grace, and the freedom of the human will, advances the following sentiment:—"We cannot conclude, because the scripture affirms them both, that therefore they are not repugnant the one to the other; but, as these two things are inconsistent, we ought rather to conclude, that one of them is not mentioned in scripture."

Because this gentleman finds himself unable to reconcile these two things, divine grace and human liberty, both which are doctrines most undoubtedly taught in holy writ, he takes his critical knife, and cuts the Gordian knot at one stroke, by positively denying the fact. Such men are never at a loss to prove any thing or nothing as suits their purpose. The bible is a mere nose of wax in their hands, and they take and twist it which way soever the fancy leads them.

Bb **Ostorodus**

"Ad Meiss. Def. Socin. p. 102.—"The men we have to deal with (the Socinians) do very confidently affirm any thing that comes into their heads, be it never so little probable, so they may thereby give any plausible solutions of the difficulties in which they find themselves entangled and perplex: and they are much given to vaunt of their unanswerable arguments, so they call them, which are many times but weak objections, such as men of learning and wit should be ashamed of."

Allix's Judgment, p. 8.

The late bishop Newton observes upon the Socinians, that their writings and apologies strike out no new light, furnish no new matter, nor even one new argument to the purpose: they are only a dull repetition of stale objections, which have been refuted over and over again."

Ostorodus says, that “ when Solomon in his Pro-
 “ verbs speaks any thing concerning manners, if it
 “ be not expressly spoken, that is, either com-
 “ manded or forbid by Moses in the Law, it is no
 “ more obligatory than the wise advice and doc-
 “ trine of any other man.”²

Enjedinus, an overseer of the Socinian churches
 in Transilvania, attacks the authority of St. Paul’s
 Epistle to the Hebrews in strong terms. He says,
 “ the things which this author writes concerning
 “ the tabernacle, chap. 9. 1. may be confuted out
 “ of the Old Testament—that he seems to use
 “ foolish arguings, and to assert some things which
 “ are manifestly false—and that this Epistle seems
 “ to favour certain heretical and erroneous opi-
 “ nions.”³

“ If,” says he again, “ a concise, abrupt obscu-
 “ rity, inconsistent with itself, and made up of al-
 “ legories, is to be called sublimity of speech, I
 “ own John to be sublime: for there is scarce one
 “ discourse of Christ, which is not altogether alle-
 “ gorical, and very hard to be understood.”

Gagneius, another champion for Socinus, treats
 St. Paul again with equal indignity:—“ I shall not
 “ a little glory,” says this vain man, “ if I shall be
 “ found to give some light to Paul’s darkness; a
 “ darkness, as some think, industriously affected.”

²Institut. cap. 30.

³See his Explicat. of this Epistle.

I will add the very just and smart reflections, of the learned Blackwall upon these last two writers:—
 “Mind,” says he, “the modesty and moderation of
 “the enemies of sound Christianity! Let any of
 “the followers of these worthy interpreters of the
 “gospel, and champions of Christianity, speak
 “worse, if they can, of the ambiguous oracles of
 “the father of lies.

“These fair-dealing gentlemen first disguise the
 “sacred writers, and turn them into a harsh allego-
 “ry, by eluding the express testimonies and proofs
 “of our Saviour’s eternal divinity; and then charge
 “them with that obscurity and inconsistency, which
 “is plainly consequent upon that sense which their
 “heretical interpretations force upon them. They
 “outrage the divine writers in a double capacity:
 “first, they debase their sense as theologues and
 “commentators; and then carp at and vilify their
 “language as grammarians and critics.”*

The learned Crellius also, another Socinian writer, as quoted by Bishop Stillingfleet, says, “that
 “the Prophets and Apostles affected tricks of wit,
 “playing with words, using them sometimes in
 “one sense, and presently quite in another.”—So
 he says of Isaiah, “that he affects little elegancies
 “of words and verbal allusions, which makes him
 “use words sometimes out of their proper and na-
 “tural

B b 2

*Sacred Classics, vol. 1, p. 228.

“ tural sense.” Thence he tells us, “ the sufferings
 “ of Christ are called chastisements, though they
 “ have nothing of the nature of chastisements in
 “ them.”

Smalcus, another writer of the same complexion, is not ashamed thus to express himself:—“ We believe, that though we should find it, *not once, nor twice, but very frequently and most expressly written in the scripture, that God was made man*; it would be much better, as it is an absurd proposition, entirely contrary to sound reason, and full of blasphemy, to invent some way of speaking, which might render it safe to be affirmed of God, rather than to understand it in the literal sense.”

I will close these instances of Socinian writers with the declaration of Le Clerc, and Dr. Whitby's reflections upon it:—“ Because,” says this Dutch Divine, “ the allegorical writers of the Jews at that time accommodated innumerable places to the Messiah, not relying upon any grammatical interpretation, but a certain old custom of explaining the scripture after this manner; and because they interpreted the hundred and tenth psalm of the Messiah, the sacred writer makes use

⁵On the Sufferings of Christ, ch. 2. sect. 11.—The same Crellius not being able to accommodate the introduction of St. John's gospel to the Socinian scheme, rejected it as spurious, without any reasonable pretence whatever for so doing.

⁶Mom. 8. ad cap. 1. Joh.—

“ use of that interpretation to his purpose ; and be-
 “ cause they acknowledged the Messiah ought to
 “ be like Melchisedec, he reasons against them
 “ from their own concessions, not against other
 “ men who might have denied what he affirmed :
 “ otherwise, if the thing be considered in itself, no
 “ strong or grammatical argument can be drawn
 “ against others from that history ; and therefore
 “ such things are not too much to be urged now,
 “ because that way of explaining scripture is grown
 “ out of use.” ‘ That is,’ says Dr. Whitby upon
 this insufferable passage, ‘ the Apostle proceeds
 ‘ all along upon weak grounds, and urges argu-
 ‘ ments, that in themselves depend on falsehoods,
 ‘ only because some silly Jews had said the same
 ‘ thing before him. I read indeed in profane
 ‘ Celsus this vile reflection on the sacred penmen,
 ‘ that they produce things unknown, fanatical, un-
 ‘ certain, and which no wise man thinks to be of
 ‘ any strength : but I am sorry to find a Christian
 ‘ writer thus exposing them to the contempt and
 ‘ scorn of anti-scripturists. *Christ is a priest for-*
 ‘ *ever after the order of Melchisedec,* saith the Apos-
 ‘ tle, Heb. 6. 20. So indeed you tell us out of
 ‘ the idle tales, and allegorical interpretations of
 ‘ some brain-sick Jews, saith Mr. Le Clerc ; but
 ‘ without all ground. *It is exceedingly manifest,*
 ‘ saith the Apostle, *that another priest should arise,*
 ‘ *after the order of Melchisedec,* chap. 7. 15. It
 B b 3 ‘ is

' is no such thing, saith Mr. Le Clerc ; this follows
 ' only from the vain concessions of the Jews : ano-
 ' ther man may deny what you thus confidently
 ' affirm.—*It is exceedingly manifest*, saith the Apos-
 ' tle ; *for the scripture testifies this, by saying, Thou*
 ' *art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec*,
 ' verse 17. And God hath confirmed this by an
 ' oath, in these words, *The Lord sware, and will*
 ' *not repent, Thou art a priest forever*. You make
 ' use of a Rabbinical interpretation, saith Mr. Le
 ' Clerc, and call that falsely a scripture testimony ;
 ' but another man may deny what you thus assume,
 ' for no strong or grammatical argument can be
 ' drawn from these words."

Such

'Whitby's Comment on the New Testament, Heb. 7. 1.—See more of Le Clerc's indecent liberties with the writings of the New Testament in Milner's Animadversions, passim.

I am sorry to have occasion to observe, that the amiable Mr. Lindsey, to whom I am under great obligations, which I have a sincere pleasure in acknowledging, has fallen into this degrading mode of interpretation, in order to establish that system of religion he has to ardently embraced. Indeed, his scheme can never be maintained upon the principles of fair and moderate interpretation. This appears to me a great and just objection to it. But his zeal for the interests of that party in which he is embarked, will not suffer him to discover the violence he has for many years been doing to the word of God. Abundance of instances might be produced from his own writings to justify these assertions ; but I will transcribe only the following, which I find at the 148th. page of Dr. Price's sermons on the Christian Doctrine, and call upon the Reader to judge, whether, if such interpretations are to be considered as the only just ones, the bible is not the most fallacious book in the world. If he wishes to see any other specimens of a similar kind he may be amply gratified in the perusal of this very worthy and ingenious gentleman's various publications. They contain

Such are the opinions of these writers concerning the authority of holy scripture. I believe the

B b 4

discerning

much truth, but, as it seems to me, much *dangerous* error. I don't know whether even Swedenborg himself has wandered much farther from the path of scriptural truth, than this learned man and his friend Dr. Priestley.—But—the passage I promised to produce from Dr. Price is as follows:—Mr. Lindsey says in his *Sequel*, page 466, &c. that the exaltation of Christ to God's right-hand, *far above all might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject to him;* is spoken of in accommodation to the ideas of the Jews and Gentiles of those days, who believed there *were* such spiritual beings as angels and demons; and means only the display of a divine power in the support of the gospel and its establishment among men.—The throne to which Christ was advanced, was, according to him (*ibid.* p. 243) not any station of dignity in heaven, but the subjection of the world to his gospel; and his glory with the Father, mentioned John 17. 5. was the glorious success of the gospel. *His power over all flesh* (John 17. 2.) *to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him,* was only his power “to afford men full assurance of the benevolent purpose of God to bestow eternal life upon them, and to furnish them with the means of virtue that lead to it,” p. 249. “Agreeably to the prejudices and imaginations of Jews and Gentiles, the subjection of all mankind to the rules of piety and virtue delivered by Christ is shadowed out under the imagery of a mighty king to whom all power was given in heaven and earth, placed above angels, principalities, &c.” p. 473. Ingenious men will sometimes advance very strange and absurd propositions. One would have supposed, did we not know the serious spirit of the writer, that he rather meant to expose, than explain, the word of God: With equal ease might one convert the whole mystery of redemption into an allegory, as some have considered the history of the fall. Deism itself, is, in my opinion, more defensible than Christianity, if such interpretations are to be admitted.

Mr. Lindsey has moreover been so much off his guard as to assert, “that the Fathers of the three first centuries, and consequently all Christian people, for upwards of three hundred years after Christ, till the Council of Nice, were generally Unitarians, what is now called either Arian or Socinian.” *Apology*, p. 23, 24. Now the truth of this assertion I, with all possible confidence, deny, and hope to make appear at large in another place, that there is not even the shadow of truth in it. In the mean time I shall refer

discerning Reader will agree with me, that if Socinianism requires such violence to be done to that divine volume, it is not so near an universal reception as Dr. Priestley and his friends predict it to be. Such declarations are, in fact, a giving up the point. No man need wish to reduce the enemies of sound Christianity to more humiliating concessions, than to oblige them, either to renounce their heterodoxy, or to treat the word of God with such barefaced indignity. The cause must be desperate which requires such desperate expedients.*

SECTION

the Reader, who wishes for satisfaction on this head, to Mr. Burgh's "Inquiry into the Belief of the Christians of the first three centuries, respecting the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:" and to Dr. Randolph's "Vindication of the Worship of the Son and the Holy Ghost:" where I promise him ample evidence to the contrary. Nay, even Mr. Lindsey's great friend and champion, the Rev. Dr. Priestley, deserts him on this ground; (I call him his champion, because Mr. Lindsey says "he is equal to an host of adversaries." *Vindiciae*, pref. p. 4.) for he gives up the great bulk of the Fathers in despair: "I allow," says he, "all that bishop Bull and Mr. Burgh ascribe to the Fathers of the second and third century; I allow that they held the doctrine of the divinity of the Son, at least, but it was in a qualified sense, and by no means the same that was maintained after the Council of Nice." *Defence of Unit. for 1787*, p. 139. See, by all means, Burgh's and Randolph's valuable works, with bishop Bull's *Defence*, and then judge.

"What do these men mean by such suggestions as these? Are they resolved to set up Deism among us, and in order thereunto, to undermine the authority of the New Testament? For it is not only St. Matthew's gospel, but St. Luke's and St. John's, which they strike at, under the pretence of representing the arguments of these wretched Ebionites. If their arguments are mean and trifling, and merely precarious, why are they not slighted and answered by such as pretend to be Christians? If they think them good, we see what we have to do with these

“men: it is not the doctrine of the Trinity so much as the authority of the gospels, which we are to maintain against them: and not those only; for the Ebionites rejected all St. Paul’s epistles, and called him an apostate and a transgressor of the law. What say our Unitarians to this? Why truly, *This comes from Epiphanius, and because he quotes no author, it seems to be one of his malicious tales.* This is a very short way of answering, if it would satisfy any men of sense. But they ought to have remembered, that within a few pages, they alledge Epiphanius as a very competent witness about the Ebionites, *because he was born in Palestine and lived very near it.* But we do not rely wholly upon Epiphanius in this matter. For those whom they allow to be the best witnesses, as to the doctrine of the Nazarenes, say the same thing concerning them: *As the most learned Origen, as they call him, who lived a long time in Syria and Palestine itself: and he affirms, that both sorts of Ebionites rejected St. Paul’s epistles: and Theodoret, who, say they, lived in Cæsarea, where the Nazarenes most abound, affirms of them, that they allowed only the gospel according to the Hebrews, and called the Apostle an apostate; by whom they meant St. Paul. And the same is said by St. Jerome who conversed among them; that they look on St. Paul as a transgressor of the law, and receive none of his writings.*—Have we not now a very comfortable account of the canon of the New Testament from these ancient Unitarians? And if our modern ones account them their predecessors, we may judge what a mean opinion they must have of the writings of the New Testament. For if they had any concernment for them, they would never suffer such scandalous insinuations to pass without a severe censure and a sufficient answer. But their work seems to be rather to pull down, than to establish the authority of revealed religion; and we know what sort of men are gratified by it.”

Stillington on the Trinity, p. 26—29.

“The Ebionites had many things in common with the Nazarenes,” says Michaelis, “but they had their peculiar, and those monstrous, errors. They likewise made use of the Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew, but they had it more corrupted. Epiphanius says it was defective, corrupt, and imperfect.—The two first chapters—are omitted, and more or less of the beginning is wanting in most of the Hebrew gospels.”

Lectures on the New Testament, sect. 90.

We have before observed, that Dr. Priestley, in order to get clear of the miraculous conception, rejects the two first chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke’s gospels. I have offered some reasons which appear to me conclusive for their authenticity. To these, however, I would moreover add in this place, that, besides Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, who asserted the miraculous concep-

SECTION VIII.

HOW different to these hateful declarations of Dr. Priestley, and his predecessors in the same

tion, and consequently held the genuineness of these chapters, Justin, who died a martyr, A. D. 167, and Irenæus, who was beheaded, A. D. 202, both frequently quote the four chapters in question. And it is remarkable, that Tertullian also, who lived to a good old age, and died, A. D. 246, not only frequently quotes the same chapters, but expressly says, that the authentic copies of the scriptures were extant in the churches founded by the Apostles in his days. His words are, "quorum literæ authenticæ adhuc recitantur." It is well known likewise, that most of the following Fathers, whose writings are come down to our own times, frequently quote the same chapters; and none of the Ancients ever called their authenticity in question, but the Ebionites, or other heretics, who rejected at the same time nearly the whole of the New Testament.—For some thoughts on the miraculous conception see Allix's Reflections upon the books of the N. T. chap. 8.

The Fathers of the church were unanimous in their belief of the inspiration of the holy scriptures. They always spake of them with great reverence and respect, whereas these Socinian writers treat them little better than the deists themselves. I will produce a few of their declarations in opposition to Dr. Priestley and his learned associates.

1. Clemens Romanus says, "that the Apostles preached the gospel, being filled with the Holy Spirit: that the scriptures are the true word of the Spirit, and that Paul wrote to the Corinthians things that were true by the aid of the Spirit."
2. Polycarp tells the Philippians, "that none could attain the wisdom of Paul, by which he wrote to them."
3. Justin Martyr says, "that the gospels were written by men full of the Holy Ghost, and that the sacred writers spoke by inspiration."
4. Irenæus says, "that all the Apostles received the gospel by divine revelation as well as Paul, and that by the will of God they delivered it to us as the foundation and pillar of our faith; that the scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God, and therefore it is wickedness to contradict them, and sacrilege to make any alteration in them."

Grotius and others interpret these words of the original copies of the books of the N. T. in the hand writing of their respective authors. See De Veritate, b. 3. c. 2. and Murray's Evidences, p. 89.

same cause, were the sentiments of the following

5. Clemens Alexandrinus says, "that we who have the scriptures are taught of God; that the scriptures are established by the authority of God; that the whole scripture is the law of God, and that they are all divine."

6. Origen says, "that the scriptures proceeded from the Holy Spirit; that there is not one tittle in them but what expresses a divine wisdom; that there is nothing in the law, or the prophets, or the gospels, or the epistles, which did not proceed from the fulness of the Spirit; that we ought with all the faithful to say, that the scriptures are divinely inspired; that the gospels are admitted as divine in all the churches of God; that the scriptures are no other than the organs of God."

7. Tertullian testifies, "that scripture is the basis of faith; that all Christians prove their doctrines out of the Old and New Testament; and that the majesty of God suggested what Paul wrote."

8. An ancient writer in Eusebius says, "that they who corrupt the sacred scriptures abolish the standard of the ancient faith, neglecting the words of the divine writings, out of regard to their own reasonings; and afterwards, that they either do not believe that the Holy Spirit uttered the divine scriptures, and then they are infidels, or think themselves wiser than the Spirit, and so seem to be possessed."

9. Theophilus Antiochenus says, "that the Evangelists and Apostles wrote by the same Spirit that inspired the Prophets."

10. The succeeding fathers of the church speak so expressly and copiously on this head, that it seems not necessary to pursue the catalogue any further.

Doddridge's Lectures, p. 325.

We may here add the words of the Emperor Constantine the Great to the same purpose:—"It would be a grievous, a very grievous thing" says he, "if, after the enemies (the Heathens) are destroyed, and there are none to oppose us, we should fall out among ourselves, to the great joy and pleasure of the adversaries; especially being to debate about divine matters, and having before us the doctrine written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: for the gospel, and the writings of the Apostles, and ancient Prophets, plainly teach us what notions we ought to entertain concerning the nature of God. Wherefore laying aside all pernicious contention, let us from the inspired oracles take a solution of all our questions."

Speech to the Council of Nice.

See other testimonies to the inspiration of the holy scriptures from the Fathers in Whitby's General Preface to the Gospels, p. 13. 14.

ing Worthies! Men, surely as capable of judging concerning truth and error as either he, or any of his Socinian brethren can pretend to be! They were persons of equal learning, at least, to speak modestly of them; of equal compass and strength of mind; of equal piety and regard to truth; and yet they always held the holy scriptures in the highest estimation. "Oh," said that great French scholar Salmasius, when he came to die, "I have lost a world of time; of time, the most precious thing in the world; whereof had I but one year longer, it should all be spent in David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles." It is exceedingly probable from this solemn declaration, made at the most solemn of all seasons, that Salmasius had a very different opinion of St. Paul from the Doctor, who has the vanity to say, "*He thinks he has shewn that the Apostle often reasons inconclusively.*"

"Propose

"How much more becomingly does the late Mr. Robinson of Cambridge speak of the writings of this great Apostle? "Possibly," says he, "we may not perceive the coherence of some of St. Paul's discourses, particularly in his epistles: but that may be owing, either to our want of attending to the drift of the apostle, or to our ignorance of some opinions, customs, or other particulars to which he may refer, well known in the time when he wrote, on which account some passages in his letters may appear dark to us, which shone with a full light to those to whom they were directed. But for the most part the coherence and forcible reasoning of this Apostle's discourses in his letters are plainly conspicuous to attentive readers. With what force of reasoning does he in some of his epistles shew the inability of the Mosaic law to justify men? What a chain of solid reasoning do we particularly find in his epistle to the Hebrews, about the insufficien-

“ Propose to me any thing out of the bible,” says the immortal Chillingworth, “ and require whether I believe it or no ; and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it hand and heart; as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this; God hath said so, therefore it is true.”²

Again:—“ I profess sincerely, that I believe all those books of scripture, which the church of England accounts canonical, to be the *infallible* word of God. I believe all things evidently contained in them; all things evidently, or even probably, deducible from them.”³

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“ cy of the ancient sacrifices? With how great strength of reasoning does the Apostle in his letter to the Romans, endeavour to convince the Jews, that God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews?”

Translation of Claude's Essay, vol. 1. p. 40.

¹Religion of Protestants, ch. 6. sect. 56.—²Ibid. pref. p. 12.—The reflections of the excellently learned Bishop Newcome upon the four gospels are worthy the most serious attention of all the friends of religion and learning. Dr. Middleton and Dr. Priestley had both made objections to several parts of those inestimable writings. The Bishop delivers his opinion in the following most candid and agreeable manner:—“ I have endeavoured,” says he, “ to solve every seeming inconsistency which others have imputed to the Evangelists, or which I could discern on a careful study of them. Some of the difficulties are such, that we may say of them, as Le Clerc says of the two genealogies, *universam antiquitatem exercitum habuere*. If my subject has occasionally led me to the discussion of minute points, let it be recollected that they are minutenesses in the most important history ever delivered to mankind.—

“ I have had a particular view to the difficulties proposed by Dr. Middleton with his usual eloquence and acuteness: and I had pleasure in observing, that this able writer is so weak in ma-

The no less celebrated Mr. Locke entertained
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“ny of his attacks. I am hence partly persuaded, but more from
“a close attention to the subject, that invincible objections cannot
“be produced; and that some friends to Christianity have granted
“more respecting real contradictions in the gospel than its adver-
“saries can extort.

“Dr. Priestley in his late harmony has revived Mr. Mann’s
“opinion with regard to our Lord’s ministerial year.—In other
“respects the sentiments of Dr. Middleton and Dr. Priestley on
“the subject of the four gospels bear a great resemblance to each
“other.—Each denies the plenary and constant inspiration of the
“Evangelists; each thinks that his opinion on this subject pro-
“motes the cause of Christianity; each appeals to fact in proof of
“it; each allows imperfect information, and irreconcilable and
“erroneous accounts, in these writers; and each admits their evi-
“dence in important facts, while he rejects it in some minute and
“circumstantial ones.

“The result of my thoughts and enquiries is, that every genuine
“proposition in scripture, whether doctrinal or historical, contains
“a truth when it is rightly understood; that the Evangelists con-
“ceived alike of the facts related by them, but sometimes place
“them in different lights, and make a selection of different cir-
“cumstances accompanying them; and that their seeming varia-
“tions would instantly vanish, were the history known to us in its
“precise order and in all its circumstances.

“The real difficulties in harmonising the gospels may be redu-
“ced to a few points. I am persuaded that all of them will at
“length yield to the efforts of rational criticism; and that the
“master-key is attention to the manner of the Evangelists. I
“shall not here discuss at large so copious a subject as the inspira-
“tion of the scriptures; but leave the Reader to judge whether
“in the gospels this doctrine is contrary to plain fact, as some
“have affirmed, and whether their more than human perfection is
“affected by such supposed inconsistencies as Dr. Middleton and
“Dr. Priestley have pointed out.—The difficulties are not inex-
“tricable; as some appear to be, which occur in the accounts of
“Socrates by Plato and Xenophon.

“Strong presumptions of their inspiration arise from an accurate
“comparison of the gospels, from their being so wonderfully sup-
“plimental to each other in passages reconcilable only by the
“suggestion of a seemingly indifferent circumstance, and from
“their real agreement in the midst of a seeming disagreement.
“Truth, like honesty, often neglects appearances: hypocrisy and
“imposture are always guarded.

Preface to the Harmony of the Gospels.

a much more honourable and becoming opinion of the word of God in general than the philosophical Divine in question. For, to a young man, desirous of information, he said, "Study the holy scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and *truth without any mixture of error*, for its matter."⁴

Again:—"Those who disguise or disesteem the holy scriptures, may be lifted under some of these denominations—the proud, heady, high-minded, superficial boasters—the low, carnal, indolent, heavy sensualists—the confident, malicious, raging, wicked hearts of unbelief."

Again:—"These holy writers, namely, the penmen of the scriptures, *inspired* from above, write nothing but truth; and in most places very weighty truths to us now; for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine; and establishing those in it who had embraced it."⁶

Again:—"The other parts of *divine revelation* are objects of faith; and are so to be received. They are truths, whereof no one can be rejected; none that is once known to be such, may or ought to be disbelieved."⁷

Again:

⁴Posthumous Works.

⁵Common Place Book, preface.

⁶Reasonab. of Christianity, p. 139.—⁷Ibid. same page.

Again:—Of the inspiration of holy scripture he frequently speaks thus:—“The unquestionable word of God.”—“Truths delivered by the Spirit of God in the bible.”—“The inspired writings of the holy scriptures.”—“Every part of it is his word, and ought every part of it to be believed by every Christian man, according as God shall enable him to understand it.”—“The whole revelation of God; all the divine truths contained in holy scripture; which every Christian man is under a necessity to believe, so far as it shall please God, upon his serious and constant endeavours, to enlighten his mind to understand them.”^a

All these things this great man speaks of the holy scriptures in general. He bears likewise a most honourable testimony to the writings of St. Paul in particular; a testimony as opposite to that of Dr. Priestley as is the north from the south pole. I will be at the pains to transcribe it, that the reader may see how little dependence is to be placed upon the assertions of this learned Divine. For if any confidence is to be reposed in the judgment of man, on such matters as these, Mr. Locke's will go, and ought to go, at least, as far as Dr. Priestley's. In opposition then to the Doctor, who has treated the writings of St. Paul with such *shameful indignity*, this great man says:—“St. Paul is certainly a coherent, argumentative, pertinent writer.”

Again:

^aVindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, passim.

Again:—"Coherence of discourse, and a direct tendency of all parts of it to the argument in hand, are most eminently to be found in him. This I take to be his character, and doubt not but he will be found to be so upon diligent examination."

Again:—"He that reads St. Paul with attention, will easily observe, that as he was full of the doctrine of the gospel; so it lay all clear and in order open to his view. When he gave his thoughts utterance upon any point, the matter flowed like a torrent; but it is plain, it was a matter he was perfectly master of. He fully possessed the entire revelation he had received from God, had thoroughly digested it: all the parts were formed together in his mind into one well contracted harmonious body; so that he was no way at an uncertainty, nor even in the least at a loss concerning any branch of it. One may see his thoughts were all of a piece in all his epistles; his notions were at all times uniform, and constantly the same, though his expressions very various."

And again:—"I remembered that St. Paul was miraculously called to the ministry of the gospel, and declared to be a chosen vessel; that he had the whole doctrine of the gospel from God by immediate revelation, and was appointed to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, for the propagating of it

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“ in the Heathen world. This was enough to per-
 “ suade me, that he was not a man of loose and
 “ shattered parts, incapable to argue, and unfit to
 “ convince those he had to deal with. God knows
 “ how to chuse fit instruments for the business he
 “ employs them in. A large stock of Jewish learn-
 “ ing he had taken in at the feet of Gamaliel, and
 “ for his information in Christian knowledge, and
 “ the mysteries and depths of the dispensation of
 “ grace by Jesus Christ, God himself had condes-
 “ cended to be his instructor and teacher. The
 “ light of the gospel he had received from the foun-
 “ tain and Father of light himself, who, I concluded,
 “ had not furnished him in this extraordinary man-
 “ ner, if all this plentiful stock of learning and il-
 “ lumination had been in danger to have been lost,
 “ or proved uselefs, in a jumbled and confused
 “ head; nor have laid up such a store of admira-
 “ ble and useful knowledge in a man, who, for
 “ want of method and order, clearness of concep-
 “ tion, or pertinency of discourse, could not draw
 “ it out into use with the greatest advantages of
 “ force and coherence.”

This is the testimony the profound author of the
 Essay on Human Understanding bears to the writ-
 ings of St. Paul. How different to that of the
 learned, ingenious, indefatigable, but sophistical
 and

¹Essay for understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, passim.

and flippant Dr. Priestley, who has the effrontry to proclaim to all the Christian world, that *he thinks he has shewn St. Paul OFTEN reasons inconclusively!* What it is to be a Philosopher!^a Any other man would

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have

^aThe term Philosopher, according to its proper derivation, has an excellent meaning, being no other than a friend of wisdom. But there is a spurious kind of knowledge, which has in all ages assumed the name of philosophy, while it continues an arrant stranger to its nature. If a man applies himself to the investigation of any of the objects of creation, and is successful enough to discover a few of the qualities which had not been noticed before, he is immediately complimented with the name of a philosopher, and ranked as a member of such societies as are instituted for the encouragement of natural knowledge, however immoral or deistical his conduct and sentiments may be in other respects. All this, however, is very well. It is proper honour should be given to whom honour is due. And it is readily confessed, that as an experimentalist on the air and other fluids Dr. Priestley is entitled to this honour above most men now living. He is, moreover, I am told, not only a very moral, but even an amiable man. And in all his pursuits he is extremely indefatigable; God having bestowed upon him an uncommonly active and vigorous mind. But, because he has had the good fortune to make several valuable discoveries on some of the fluids of nature, and because he is endowed with some natural and moral attainments superior to the great bulk of his fellow creatures, does it therefore follow, that he is competent to decide what is truth and what is error upon every other branch of science? And is he thence authorized to outrage the holy scriptures, to treat the Apostles of Christ with a vain superiority, and even to degrade the Redeemer of souls himself to the level of a mere, fallible, weak, peccable, and erroneous man like ourselves? Against all such characters St. Paul cautions the Colossians to be upon their guard:—*Beware, says the zealous Apostle, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY.*

It is evident from Dr. Priestley's own concessions, that the study of the works of nature, and the name of philosopher, by no means entitles any man, merely as such, to superior wisdom and discernment: for he himself has told us, that the greater part of his philosophical acquaintance ridicule his belief of Christianity. Nay, among the French, he says, no man of any reputed understanding

have modestly supposed, that the Apostle is perfectly right in all his reasonings, and that he himself laboured under some misapprehension, where they seemed to differ in their opinions. When Dr. Priestley

so much as pretends to believe the gospel. And all those who are called Philosophers in that moon-stricken country, a very respectable character informed him, with whom that same gentleman was acquainted, are even Atheists. This is a fine picture of modern philosophers; and drawn too by one of the honourable fraternity.* Let no man's heart therefore fail him because of a popular and respectable name. A great majority of that description are poor creatures. They have got a smattering of learning, and are thereby vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind. Proud they are and self-willed. Because they have picked up a few speculative notions concerning the works of creation, they ignorantly conceive themselves qualified to decide even upon the most abstruse subjects of religion and morals. They are the mere curs of philosophy, snarling and barking against God and his Christ, against Christianity and the truths it contains: or if, with Dr. Priestley, they admit of a Saviour at all, he shall be divested of every attribute that can qualify him for the office of Redeemer. To accomplish all this, the scriptures, which contain the revelation of God's will, and the only genuine source of information on subjects purely religious, shall be considered as the fallible, erroneous writings, of fallible, erroneous men. Some of them shall be embraced, and others rejected, according as they agree or disagree with their preconceived system of opinions. And, because Dr. Priestley has obtained a just reputation in philosophical experiments, if he does but assert any proposition in religion or morals to be true or false, the whole tribe of Philosophists will swear, that it is even so as the Doctor has said. A conduct like this, however, is unworthy of true philosophers. The very reverse is the only proper one for us to follow. We should, as much as possible, divest ourselves of all party prejudice, and blind submission to human authority, and (having first satisfied ourselves respecting the evidence for the truth of holy scripture) come to learn our religion from the word of God alone. Here we should set our foot. *Thus saith the Bible*—in its plain and unequivocal meaning—is worth a million of vague conjectures from the vain and self-conceited herd of empirics in philosophy.

*See page 23d. of these Strictures.

Priestley can shew equal credentials, we will give him equal credit. In the mean time he must excuse all the friends of real Christianity and Bible-religion, if they consider the great, learned, indefatigable, and inspired Apostle, as reasoning, on all occasions, most divinely and conclusively, and himself, as, very frequently, reasoning most sophistically and inconclusively.³

But to proceed:—After the foregoing most extraordinary declarations, we shall not be surprized at almost any thing this hardy gentleman can further advance. He informs the world that he has drawn his sword and thrown away the scabbard, consequently we may expect cutting and flashing work: and we shall not be disappointed in our expectations. I will, therefore, treat the Reader, if blasphemy against the Son of man and Spirit of God can be called a treat, with a few other specimens of his daring assertions:—

“The doctrine of the trinity and atonement,” says he, “are such as no miracles can prove.”⁴ That these, however, are the doctrines of holy scripture has been sufficiently proved by many learned and excellent men. Dr. Priestley may deny, if he

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pleases,

³Let the Reader who wishes to be more fully informed of the real character of this Apostle's writings consult Lord Littleton's “Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul,” where he will find a very different account from that of our learned Divine.

⁴Hist. of Cor. vol. 2. p. 461.—“The Platonic notion of the Divine essence enlarging itself to three hypostases, is considerable on these accounts ;

pleases, that there is a sun in the firmament; but we shall continue, notwithstanding his perverseness, to believe with our forefathers the actual existence of that bright luminary, on which our all depends. Without Christ's divinity there can be no atonement, and without atonement for the sins of the world, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. Infinitely more pious and consistent with truth are the sentiments

" 1. That it is delivered with so much assurance by the opposers of Christianity; such as Plotinus, Porphyrius, Proclus and others were known to be, and they speak with no manner of doubt concerning it; as may be seen in the passages of Porphyry preserved by St. Cyril¹ and others.

" 2. That they took it up from no revelation; but as a notion in itself agreeable enough; as appears by the passages in Plato and others concerning it. They never suspected it to be liable to the charge of nonsense, and contradictions, as our modern Unitarians charge the Trinity with; although their notion as represented by Porphyry be as liable to it. How came these men of wit and sense, to hit upon, and to be so fond of such absurd principles, which lead to the belief of mysterious nonsense, and impossibilities; if these men may be trusted?

" 3. That the nations most renowned for antiquity and deep speculations did light upon the same doctrine, about a Trinity of hypostases in the Divine essence. To prove this I shall not refer to the Trismegistic books, or the Chaldee oracles, or any doubtful authorities; but Plutarch asserts² the three Hypostases to have been received among the Persians, and Porphyry and Jamblicus say the same of the Egyptians..

" 4. That this hypostasis did maintain its reputation so long in the world. For we find it continued to the time of Macrobius, who mentions it as a reasonable notion, namely, of one Supreme Being, Father of all, and a Mind proceeding from it, and Soul from Mind."³

Stillingfleet on the Trinity, p. 216.

¹Cyrl. c. Jul. l. 1. 1. and l. 8.

²De Isid et Osirid. p. 369. ed. Tr.—Euseb. Præp, Evan. l. 3. c. 11.—Jamb. de Myst. sect. 8. c. 2.—³Macrobi. in Som. Scip. l. 1. c. 14.

sentiments of the late pathetic Dr. Ogden. "Death," says this pleasing writer, "which God made not, took possession of the world, and guilt and pain have a large dominion in it; and might have stretched their empire to a dreadful extent, had not a person of Divine nature and attributes, united, in a manner incomprehensible, with the Supreme Father of all things, been pleased, by the Father's appointment, and out of his own inconceivable goodness, to interpose in our behalf.

"He came down from heaven; and still continuing to be one with the Supreme Nature, he assumed ours. He became man: he lived upon earth, did good, endured pain, preached piety and righteousness, worked wonders, suffered death as a malefactor, restored himself to life, returned to heaven, and now governs his church by the operation of yet another Divine person, who with him and the Father, is one God, blessed forever.

"All this, you seem to say, is strange and wonderful. It is so. The Divine existence, eternity, infinity, which yet reason obliges us to acknowledge, is very wonderful. The Divine government of the world, which we experience, is in many instances exceedingly astonishing. The world is filled with wonders; and if you attempt ignorantly to remove them, they become

“ greater. If you deny what is strange, you must
 “ admit what is impossible.”—Pious and just.

Again:—“ As to the divinity of Christ, an in-
 “ genious man would easily find as many plausible
 “ arguments for the divinity of Moses.”⁶

Let the serious Christian judge again whether
 this is not an assertion unworthy of any man of
 common integrity, much more of a man of Dr.
 Priestley’s abilities and reputation.

Again:—“ I conceive the doctrine of the Trini-
 “ ty to be a fundamental corruption of the religion
 “ which I profess, the greatest of those that mark
 “ the church of Rome.”⁷

Again:—

⁵Ogden’s Sermons, vol. 1. p. 146, 147.

⁶Letters to Dr. Geddes, p. 5.—“ Nor is it to be wondered, that
 “ the will of God, when clothed in words, should be liable to that
 “ doubt and uncertainty, which unavoidably attends that sort of
 “ conveyance; *when even his Son, whilst clothed in flesh, was sub-*
 “ *ject to all the frailties and inconveniences of human nature, sin*
 “ *excepted.*”

Locke’s Essay, b. 3. c. 9. s. 23.

⁷Letter to Mr. Pitt, p. 24.—“ I do not deny,” says Bishop
 “ Kidder, “ but that some men have given such an account of the
 “ Trinity, as implies a contradiction; but this is not therefore
 “ chargeable upon the doctrine, as it is delivered in the Scripture,
 “ and by the wiser Christians.—It is an easy thing for men to de-
 “ clare against this doctrine; but to shew the contradiction is im-
 “ possible. Men of the greatest wit and learning, both Jews, and
 “ Christians, and Heathens also, have not been able to see the in-
 “ consistence of this doctrine with sound reason.”

Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3. p. 127.

The very learned Cudworth is not less explicit:—“ We shall
 “ conclude here with confidence,” says he, “ that the Christian
 “ Trinity, though there be very much of mystery in it; yet is
 “ there nothing at all of plain contradiction to the undoubted
 “ principles of human reason.” Ibid.

Again:—"The divinity of Christ, original sin, predestination, and the atonement, deserve to be numbered among the grossest of all errors."

That the doctrine of the atonement by Christ is a scriptural doctrine may be very safely left to the judgement of the most ordinary Christian. Only let him read the Mosaic institution, the fifty third chapter of Isaiah, the ninth chapter of Daniel, the tenth chapter of John, the third chapter of Romans, the second chapter of St. John's first epistle, and the whole epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, with seriousness and candour, considering the whole as the word of God, and he will be in no danger of being

Every scheme of redemption that can be devised by mortals is replete with difficulties insolvable by the highest powers of human reason. Aware of this, the Deist rejects the whole of revelation as incredible. He considers not, that natural religion also is liable to objections equally insolvable. If therefore he wishes to act consistently he must not stop here; Atheism will be his dernier resort. —But—will atheism account for all the appearances of things? So far from it, that the difficulties are encreased an hundred fold. We must, therefore, if we act a reasonable part, come back to Christianity; for here alone a wise man may find rest for the sole of his foot. But, of the schemes of redemption devised by men, and founded, on the word of God, which shall we embrace? for every one is confessedly attended with very serious difficulties. The schemes most in vogue have been three—the Arian—the Socinian—and the Trinitarian. It seems right to embrace that scheme which is most honourable for God—most safe for man—most agreeable to the divine word—and least encumbered with difficulties. The patrons of each contend in behalf of their own. I would wish to recommend the Reader to Dean Tucker's "Brief and Dispassionate View of the Difficulties attending the Trinitarian, Arian, and Socinian Systems;" where he will probably find some satisfaction on this profound and mysterious subject.

*Importance of Free Inquiry, p. 12.

being seduced by the confident assertions of this learned man. He is constitutionally warm and sanguine, and in whatever he embarks, he embarks with all his might. Such a conduct would be greatly to his honour, if his understanding were clear, his judgment sound, and his views properly directed. This, however, cannot be the case, I think; because he was as dogmatical in his assertions, when his religious sentiments were the reverse to what they are at present, as he is now.* All cannot be true, therefore, that this gentleman is pleased to advance. His brother Timothy is equally as bold and rash an assertor in favour of absolute predestination and its concomitant doctrines, as the Doctor is for the mere humanity of Christ and its appendages. It is a curious circumstance, that the two zealous brothers should be moving heaven and earth to establish doctrines as opposite to each other as the two poles of the world. In contradiction, however, to the hasty assumptions of the learned Doctor, on the subject of Christ's atonement; I will produce the opinions of three persons, whom every one will allow to be as capable of judging as any human being may ever expect to be. The first is Milton, the second Grotius, and the third Tillotson. Milton thus sweetly sings:—

—“ Man disobeying,

“ Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins

“ Against the high supremacy of heaven;—

“ Die he or justice must; unless for him

“ Some

*See Letters to Dr. Horsley, preface, p. 7.

- " Some other able, and as willing, pay
 " The rigid Satisfaction, death for death.
 " Say, heav'nly pow'rs, where shall we find such love ;
 " And now without redemption all mankind
 " Must have been lost, adjudg'd to death and hell
 " By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
 " In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
 " His dearest mediation thus renew'd.
 " Behold *me* then, *me* for him, life for life,
 " I offer ; on *me* let thine anger fall.—
 " His words were ended but his meek aspect
 " Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love.—
 " O thou in heav'n and earth the only peace
 " Found out for mankind under wrath—
 " His crimes make guilty all his sons ; thy merit
 " Imputed shall absolve them who renounce
 " Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
 " And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
 " Receive new life. So man, as is most just,
 " Shall satisfy for man, be judg'd, and die,
 " And dying rise, and rising with him raise
 " His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
 " So heav'nly love shall out-do hellish hate,
 " Giving to death, and dying to redeem."

Grotius wrote a whole book upon the Satisfaction which Christ made for the sins of the world: a book which ought very seriously to be considered, before this great Christian doctrine, the foundation of all our hopes, is given up. This celebrated man closes that admirable work in the following very decisive manner:—"Whosoever taketh away

“ the sacrifice of Christ, leaveth him no true priest-
 “ hood, contrary to the manifest authority of scrip-
 “ ture, which assigns unto Christ a priestly dignity
 “ distinct from the prophetic and kingly offices.
 “ Neither is this spoken in a figurative way, but
 “ in a manner which is most true and real. For
 “ the priesthood of Christ is opposed to the Levi-
 “ tical priesthood, which was a true one, as a spe-
 “ cies of the same kind, more perfect than another
 “ species, which is said to be less perfect. Nor
 “ could it be rightly inferred, that it was necessary
 “ Christ should have somewhat to offer (Heb. 8.
 “ 3.) unless from the reality of that priesthood to
 “ which he was appointed. But indeed it is not to
 “ be wondered, that those who deprive Christ of
 “ his natural glory, the glory of his Deity, should
 “ lessen also his offices, and refuse to acknowledge
 “ the chief benefits he hath procured for us.

“ To thee, Lord Jesus, as true God, as true Re-
 “ deemer, as true priest, as true sacrifice for sin,
 “ with the Father, and the Spirit, one God with
 “ thee, be honour and glory.”²

The

²Let the learned Reader consult the whole book, which will richly reward his pains. See also his Annotations on Eph. 1. 7.—Consult moreover M. De Burigny’s *Life of Grotius*, book 6. chap. 6. for a defence of Grotius from the charge of Socinianism.—Outram *De Sacrificiis* is likewise a work of great merit, and may be read with much advantage. He that wishes to form an impartial judgment on this very important subject should do it and himself the justice to read what the learned Crellius has written in reply to Grotius. Outram’s book is a sort of rejoinder to Crellius’ answer to Grotius,

The excellent Tillotson,³ quoting at large Mat. 28. 28.—John 6. 51.—Ibid. 10. 11.—Ibid. 15. 12, 13.—Mat. 26. 28.—Rom. 5. 6.—1 Cor. 15. 3.—2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.—Eph. 1. 7.—Col. 1. 20, 21, 22.—1 Thes. 5. 9, 10.—Heb. 2. 9.—Ibid. 9. 11.—15.—Ibid. 9. 25.—28.—Ibid. 10. 11, 12.—1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.—Ibid. 2. 21, 24.—Ibid. 3. 18.—1 John 2. 1, 2.—Ibid. 3. 16.—Ibid. 4. 10.—Rev. 1. 5.—Ibid. 5. 9. adds—“ From these and many
 “ other texts, it seems to be very plain and evident,
 “ that Christ died for our sins, and suffered in our
 “ stead, and by the sacrifice of himself has made an
 “ atonement for us, and reconciled us to God, and
 “ hath paid a price and ransom for us; and by the
 “ merit of his death hath purchased for us forgive-
 “ ness of sins, and inheritance among them that are
 “ sanctified. And I do not know any doctrine of
 “ our religion, that is founded and established up-
 “ on more and plainer texts, which cannot be un-
 “ derstood in any other sense, without offering great
 “ violence to the first and most obvious meaning
 “ of them.

“ I
 and Stillingfleet on the Satisfaction of Christ is an answer to Crel-
 lius.—Mr. Hey's “ Short Defence of the Atonement,” is a suffi-
 cient Answer to every thing advanced by Dr. Priestley on the subject.

³The late very learned Dr. Jortin observes, “ that amongst ma-
 “ ny things which may be mentioned in favour of Tillotson, this
 “ should not be forgotten, that of those, who have passed their
 “ judgment upon him, there never was a son of absurdity, who
 “ did not dislike, or a sensible reader, who did not approve his wri-
 “ tings.”

“ I know the Socinians have framed evasions to
“ all these texts, which I have not time now to
“ produce and examine: nor would it be worth
“ the while. I shall only say this to them in gene-
“ ral, that there is no principle of religion so plain-
“ ly laid down in the whole scripture, but may be
“ overthrown by the same, or the like evasions.
“ Suppose Christ had died in our stead, and made
“ satisfaction for sin, and God had intended to de-
“ clare so much to us; in what plainer, and more
“ express, and proper words could he have done it,
“ than the scripture hath already done? If God had
“ said in the scripture expressly, that Christ had
“ *died in our room and stead, and had satisfied for our*
“ *sins*; these very expressions, by the same arts of
“ interpretation, might have been strained and
“ wrested to some other sense. So that if God did
“ not intend to express to us by these texts, that
“ *Christ satisfied for the sins of men*, yet they are so
“ obvious to be interpreted to that sense, and so
“ hardly, if at all, capable of any other, that we can-
“ not imagine, without a great reflection upon the
“ wisdom of God, that he should deliver his mind
“ to men in words and expressions so exceedingly
“ liable to a quite different sense from what he in-
“ tended. Besides that there is nothing more un-
“ reasonable, than to deny that to be the meaning
“ of scripture, which if it had been the meaning,
“ could not have been expressed in plainer and more
“ advantageous

“ advantageous words ; especially when this is
“ done, not in one or two texts, but very many ;
“ and not by one form of expression ; but several,
“ and all inclining to the same sense ; and, which is
“ worst of all, this violence is offered to scripture
“ in a matter which does neither contradict other
“ texts of scripture, nor the reason of mankind,
“ namely, that one man should suffer in another’s
“ stead, and make satisfaction for the crimes and
“ faults which another hath committed ; supposing
“ the party offended be willing to accept of the
“ commutation, and the party that suffers in ano-
“ ther’s stead do voluntarily do it.*”

Thus far this most sensible and learned Archbishop. Let us now proceed with Dr. Priestley’s *Philippics* against Christ and the truths of his gospel.

“ The divinity of Christ” says he again, “ is an
“ impious doctrine—it is a great corruption of
Christianity—a shocking corruption of genuine
“ Christianity—a most absurd and impious doctrine
“ —a radical corruption of Christianity.”

Again:—“ The doctrine of the Trinity is a
“ masterpiece of all the absurdities that ever were
“ invented—men of plain understandings never do
“ believe any such thing—It is a monstrous doc-
“ trine—It is one of the most odious and absurd
“ doctrines

*Sermon 228.

"doctrines that ever was imposed on mankind, di-
 "rectly contrary to natural and revealed religion,
 "and to all the rational faculties God has given us
 "—It is an absurd and horrid doctrine"—The
 "Trinity and transubstantiation are both alike irra-
 "tional, unscriptural, and unnatural, utterly contra-
 "ry to all good sense and reason—And, as to the
 "Trinitarians, nothing is more plain than that they
 "feed upon ashes; *a deceived heart hath turned*
 "*them aside*, because they will not make use of
 "those rational faculties, which God hath given
 "them; nor say, *Is there not a lie in my right*
 "*hand?*"

Again:

"Expressions like these concerning the Great Unknown ill be-
 come poor frail mortals. Dr. Priestley, with all his *unseemly confi-*
dence, philosopher as he is, knows little more of the Deity's mode
 of existence than the most simple ploughman, who is competently
 versed in his bible. Modest terms would therefore become him
 well. Men with minds, *truly liberal and enlarged*, never use lan-
 guage like the above. Besides, does he not know, that some of
 the greatest and best of human beings have ever been of opinion that
 the Godhead does really admit of distinctions something like to what
 we call a Trinity? Does he not himself grant, that the holy scrip-
 tures *seem*, at least, to contain such a doctrine? Was he not formerly
 himself of the same opinion? Whence then all these rash and in-
 temperate exclamations? Did ever *wild enthusiast*, upon topics the
 most absurd, advance any thing more positive and indecent? What if
 Dr. Priestley does conceive that he sees reason to reject the doc-
 trine of *three hypostases* in the divine *Unity*? Let him reject it: and
 let him inculcate with all plainness what he conceives to be the
 truth. But yet let him reflect that he is but a man; that he is en-
 compassed with darkness and infirmity; that he is naturally warm
 and hasty in his conclusions; that the subject he determines on,
 with so much audacious assurance, is awfully deep; that many
 great and good men, of every denomination and description, have

¹See Remarks on Primitive Candour, p. 100.

Again:—"The merits of Christ is a Popish invention. It is impossible Christ should make
D d " satisfaction

embraced, with as great confidence as he rejects, what he calls, this "absurd and horrid doctrine;" that Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, and all their followers, long before our Saviour's time, entertained sentiments somewhat similar; that—but I stop, and close these remarks upon the *ridiculous rashness of the learned Doctor with the just reproof of the more learned Cudworth*;—"Besides," says this very skilful Divine, "this advantage from the ancient Pagan Platonists and Pythagoreans, admitting a Trinity into their theology, in like manner as Christianity doth (whereby Christianity was the more recommended to the philosophic Pagans) there is another advantage of the same, extending even to this present time, probably not unintended also, by divine providence: that *whereas bold and conceited wits, precipitantly condemning the doctrine of the Trinity for nonsense, absolute repugnancy to human faculties, and impossibility*, have thereupon some of them quite shaken off Christianity, and all revealed religion, professing only theism; others have frustrated the design thereof by paganizing it into creature worship, or idolatry. This ignorant and conceited confidence of both may be retunded and confuted from hence, because the most ingenious and acute of all the Pagan philosophers, the Platonists and Pythagoreans, who had no bias at all upon them, nor any scripture revelation, which might seem to impose upon their faculties; but followed the free sentiments and dictates of their own minds, did, notwithstanding, not only entertain this Trinity of divine hypostases *eternal and uncreated*, but were also fond of the hypothesis, and made it a main fundamental of their theology."

Cudworth's True Intellectual System, from Kidder, part 3. p. 127.

Dr. Trapp justly observes that the Trinity is as intelligible as omnipresence, eternity, God's simplicity, self-existence, and the like; and that the Three and One are much more easy to be reconciled than foreknowledge in God and free-agency in man.

Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 7.

"The Socinians," says father Malebranche, "cannot comprehend the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation: and this suffices not only to their disbelieving it, but also to their affirming of those that do believe it, in an arrogant and libertine way, that they are born to slavery."

Search after Truth, c. 2. b. 3.

“ satisfaction^s unto God for us.”—The merits and satisfaction of Christ, we grant, are impossible upon the hypothesis, that he is a *mere* man. But upon our scriptural scheme, that he is God as well as man, they are not only possible, but even highly reasonable. The Doctor should not be so magisterial in his tone. Other people have got reason and discernment as well as himself. Deeper thinkers than he, and men of more enlarged minds, have been of a very different opinion. “ We agree
 “ with our adversaries about the authority of rea-
 “ son,” says a great man; “ but we dissent about
 “ the

“ Expiatory sacrifices were in use from the earliest times, and
 “ were expressly required by Almighty God of the nation of the
 “ Jews. This Divine person (Christ) therefore, that he might
 “ have somewhat much more valuable to offer, assumed a body
 “ that was prepared for him, and offered himself as a Lamb with-
 “ out spot to God. He had no sins of his own to expiate: but,
 “ regardless of pleasure, ease, and life, and moved by the most
 “ exalted devotion to God, and unbounded charity to man, he
 “ gave his side to the spear, he stretched out his arms upon the
 “ cross: and made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation,
 “ and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”

Dr. Ogden's Sermons, vol. 1. p. 183.—If the Reader is a stranger to these Discourses he has a pleasure to come in the perusal of them. They contain a pleasing defence of all the leading doctrines of the gospel.

The celebrated Dr. South speaks of the satisfaction made for sin by the death of Christ as a fundamental of Christianity. “ I
 “ for my part,” says he, “ cannot look upon any thing as a more
 “ fundamental article of the Christian religion than Christ's satis-
 “ faction for sin, by which alone the lost sons of Adam are recon-
 “ ciled to their offended God, and so put into new capacities of
 salvation.”

Sermons, vol. 3. p. 271.

“ the exercise of it, and the bounds of its jurisdiction. We believe even the abstrusest mysteries of the Christian religion; of which mysteries perhaps we can assign no reasons, but for our belief we assign a good one; because they are plainly taught in the word of God, who can neither err nor deceive. And this we affirm to be a reasonable conclusion, though it carry us even to the confines of heaven, beyond the limits of reason.”^a

Again: —“ If the doctrine of atonement be true, it cannot, however, be pretended that David, or any other pious person in the Old Testament, was at all acquainted with it; and therefore the belief of it cannot be necessary to salvation, or indeed of much consequence.”^b If assertions were proofs the business would be settled, and the doctrine of atonement must be discarded forever. But as this is not the case, I will take the liberty of directing the Reader again for an answer to the above declaration to the twenty second chapter of Genesis, the twelfth and twenty ninth chapters of Exodus, the nine first, the fourteenth and sixteenth chapters of Leviticus, the twenty eight and twenty ninth chapters of Numbers, the twenty second, fortieth, and sixty ninth psalms, the fifty second and fifty third chapters of Isaiah, and the ninth chapter

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of

^aDr. Bentley's Sermons, p. 312.

^bHist. of Cor. vol. 1. p. 158. — See a good illustration and defence of the doctrine of Christ's atonement in Hervey's Theron and Aspasio, Dialogues the 3d. and 4th.

of Daniel. Let any serious man, I say, read all these chapters, comparing them with St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, and other parts of the New Testament, and then let him persist in the opinion of Dr. Priestley if he can, that David and other pious persons of the Old Testament were totally unacquainted with the doctrine of atonement.* May we not ask the learned Gentleman too, whether a strict observance of the Jewish sacrifices was not of great consequence to those who lived under that dispensation? What would have been the consequence if David and other pious persons had neglected the morning and evening sacrifice, the celebration of the passover, or the annual feast of expiation?" Dr.

Priestley

*The savage inhabitants of Madagascar use sacrifices whenever they would supplicate the Deity in their distresses. Mr. Ives, in his Travels through Persia, observes upon this custom of theirs, that "he saw many circumstances in the Madagascarian sacrifices, so exactly resembling those which are mentioned in the Old Testament as offered up by the Jews, that he could not turn his thoughts back to the original without being sensibly struck at the exactness of the copy." Ives' Voyage, p. 16.

The writings of Homer, Virgil, and other ancient Heathen authors, it is well known, abound greatly with descriptions of sacrificial rites. Indeed their religion consisted almost wholly in them. The same custom prevails among the American Indians at this day. See Edwards' Life of David Brainerd, p. 353 for the description of a curious ceremony of this sort.

†Milton calls the Jewish ceremonies,

———"Religious rites

"Of sacrifice; informing men, by types

"And shadows, of that destin'd seed to bruise

"The serpent, by what means he shall achieve

"Mankind's deliverance." P. L. b. 12. l. 231—235.

Priestley must allow, that the observance of these atoning rites was of much consequence to them; and that no person under that dispensation could be esteemed a pious person without such observance. Not only their well-being, but their very existence depended upon it. Of equal importance, in our opinion, is the doctrine of Christ's atonement, under the Christian dispensation. For if *he that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

Again:—"Christ went through the scene of his trial and crucifixion with wonderful composure, and without the least appearance of any thing like agony of mind."—"One should suppose it were impossible that Dr. Priestley could be serious in such a declaration as this; seeing it is contrary to the clearest evidence, and the plainest matter of fact. Let the Reader however consult psalms the twenty second and sixty ninth, Isaiah the fifty third, Matthew the twenty sixth and twenty seventh, and Hebrews the fifth, and then judge for himself what truth there is in the above assertion.

Again:—"According to the plain general tenor of scripture, the pardon of sin, is in reality,
D d 3 "always

“ always dispensed by the free mercy of God, on
 “ account of men’s personal virtue, a penitent up-
 “ right heart, and a reformed exemplary life, with-
 “ out regard to the sufferings, or merit, of any be-
 “ ing whatever.”

It is evident from the general prevalence of sa-
 crifices in all ages and nations, that the sense of
 mankind has ever been the reverse of Dr. Priest-
 ley’s assertion. And since the beginning of the
 world has it not been known, that ever one single
 sin was pardoned, but with an eye to the all-atoning
 oblation. For the offers of pardon and salvation
 are made in scripture to those only that repent and
 return to God, for the sake of what Christ has done
 and suffered, in whom they are therefore declared
 to be accepted by God, and to whom they are here-
 upon taught to ascribe the glory of their salvation.
 Let the serious Reader, who believes the declarati-
 ons of holy scripture, carefully peruse the following
 passages, and judge.—John 3. 14—17.—Acts 10.
 33, 36, 43.—Ibid. 2. 38.—Ibid. 3. 18, 19.—Rom.
 4. 25.—2 Cor. 5. 18—21.—Eph. 1. 5—7.—Col.
 1. 20—22.—Heb. 1. 3.—Ibid. 9. 14.—Ibid. 10.
 4—10, 14.—Rev. 1. 5, 6.—Ibid. 5. 9, 10.—Ibid.
 7. 13—15.

Reject the doctrine of atonement, and all these
 declarations of scripture, with many more to the
 same

Hist. of Cor. vol. 1. p. 207,

same purpose, not only loose all their propriety, but become unnatural and absurd.

Dr. Priestley, I well know, may produce the fifteenth psalm, and other such like excellent moral passages from the Old Testament, in favour of the above position. But then, let the Reader recollect, that no Jew could answer the description given in that psalm, who was not conscientious, at the same time, in the regular discharge of all the sacrificial rites of the Mosaic œconomy. Dr. Priestley is not at liberty to select the moral parts of the Old and New Testament, and set them in opposition to the ceremonial. He must take the whole together as one grand, comprehensive, and finished system of religion. A contrary conduct has been the bane of the church in all ages. Philosophers should act philosophically.

Again:—"The Word of God, and the Spirit of God, are not distinct persons from God, but the power of God, and the energy of God."^a

It is not easy to express one's abhorrence of this declaration in decent language. The existence of

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his

^aSee Priestley's Appeal, and Elwall's Trial, as published by him, passim, for all the above quotations where there is no particular reference.—This modern Socinian hath, in all these blasphemous expressions, trodden pretty much in the footsteps of his predecessors in the same good cause. Their terms are such as these:—"Deus tripersonatus—idolum portentosum—figmentum Satanæ—Anti-christi Cerberus—triceps Geryon—idolum trifrons—monstrum triforme—deus incognitus, ideoque procul rejiciendus, et Satanæ conditori suo restituendus."

Browne's Discourse on the Trinity, p. 178.

his Saviour and Sanctifier, he annihilates with one stroke of his pen. May not the Redeemer say to him as he did to a brother of his in times of old, Priestley, Priestley, *why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*—A sufficient answer to the Doctor's impious assertion are the words of Christ himself—*Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* That is, according to Dr. Priestley's mode of interpretation, baptizing them in the name of God, and of his power, and of his energy.—Is there any thing in the doctrine of the holy Trinity equally absurd with this? And yet this is the man who pretends all the world is in the dark but himself and a few friends who embrace similar absurdities.

Candid Reader! I appeal to thy judgment again. Would not any sober-minded man be all amazement to hear Dr. Priestley make use of such language as is contained in the above intemperate, indecent, and unphilosophical assertions? He well knows that the whole Christian world, for many centuries, have embraced the doctrines of Christ's divinity and atonement.⁹ Men of all descriptions have

⁹“The divinity of Jesus,” says an able living author, “I conceive to be the chief corner stone in the edifice of Christianity. Remove this from the building and the whole fabric immediately totters, the foundation is shaken to the very centre. There appears at once an evident disproportion between the end and the means, the importance of the object proposed, and the person by

have considered them, not only as important, but even as essential to salvation. And, surely, when men like Milton, Grotius, and Tillotson, besides many others that might be named, have coolly and decidedly espoused these doctrines as the undoubted truths of God, if we must dissent from them, if the light of our minds does constrain us to think in a different channel, we ought at least to express our disagreement with modesty and diffidence. Dr. Priestley will find no difficulty in allowing, that there is, speaking moderately, some appearance of these doctrines in holy scripture. These truly great, pious, and learned men have been clearly of opinion they are actually contained therein. He himself saw, or thought he saw them there in times of yore. And if at present he is of a different opinion, he will express that opinion with caution and reserve: and still retain a respect for the judgment of those great men from whom he cannot now but differ.—But no—They are all fools and blockheads who embrace the orthodox system. “Christ is a mere man”—pardon me, gentle Reader! for repeating

“whom it was accomplished. And then the great doctrine of atonement and expiation, by the blood of its Author, falls to the ground, and all the rich promises of the gospel are done away.”—Again:—“The divinity of Jesus is so conspicuous a feature in the gospel, and is supported by evidences which press upon us so closely on every side, that I flatter myself, there is not any one point of Christ’s religion more capable of being clearly proved and ascertained, than his claim to a divine nature.”

Hawker’s Sermons, p. 8, 40.

ing the odious tale—" like ourselves; the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary ;" capable of misapplying the scriptures of the Old Testament ; naturally fallible, peccable, weak, like other men ; liable to sin, as well as subject to error : neither is there any thing so very different in the occasion or manner of his death, from that of others who suffered and died after him in the cause of Christianity, but that their sufferings and deaths may be considered in the same light with his.— Moses has given us a very lame account of the creation and fall of man.—Solomon wrote without any inspiration.—David's psalms contain no predictions of the Messiah.—The Prophets fell into great mistakes—the Apostles did the same. The miraculous conception is an incumbrance on the Christian scheme :—St. Luke's account of it abounds with the most manifest improbabilities.—It is evident the Apostles often applied the scriptures very improperly, and with no better judgment than their unbelieving countrymen.— The apostle Paul often reasons inconclusively.— He has strained very much by the force of imagination to reconcile the Jews to the Christian religion.—The writings of this Apostle abound with analogies and antitheses on which no very serious stress can be laid.—The Apostles have
" disguised

¹ See an able defence of the miraculous conception in Hawker's Sermons, p. 150—164.

“disguised the simple religion of Christ.”—If all these things were strictly true, there might have been no harm in Dr. Priestley’s telling the world so, in a proper and becoming manner, even though he should incur the displeasure of all the learned around him. He might suppose the interest of truth required such a conduct from him. But then, why all this air of superiority and disdain? Why treat the religion of his country, and the opinions of the learned in all ages and nations with such sovereign contempt? * Has the opinion of a Milton, a Grotius, or a Tillotson, no weight in the scale against this mighty man?—Let us hear the gentleman once more:—“The doctrine of the Trinity and atonement are such as no miracles can prove,—An ingenious man will easily find as many plausible arguments for the divinity of Moses as of Christ.—“The doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental corruption of Christianity, the greatest of those corruptions that mark the church of Rome.—The divinity of Christ and the atonement deserve to be numbered among the grossest of all errors.—
The

“I know nothing more dangerous,” says the celebrated Neck-
er, than the inconsiderate censures of those religious ceremonies
“received and respected in the country where we live. Some
“do not think that they are acting wrong when they speak slighting-
“ly of the various symbols of public worship; yet, if they attentive-
“ly observed the kind of minds, and the first habits of the greater
“part of those to whom they address such discourses, they would
“know how easy it is to wound them in the sentiment, which is the
“source of all their tranquillity and the safe-guard of their moral
“conduct.”

Importance of religious Opinions, chap. 15.

“ The divinity of Christ is an impious doctrine—
 “ it is a great corruption of Christianity—a shock-
 “ ing corruption of genuine Christianity—a most
 “ absurd and impious doctrine—a radical corrupti-
 “ on of Christianity.—The merits of Christ is a
 “ Popish invention.—It was impossible Christ
 “ should make satisfaction unto God for us.—The
 “ doctrine of the Trinity is a masterpiece of all the
 “ absurdities that ever were invented.—It is a
 “ monstrous doctrine.—It is one of the most odi-
 “ ous and absurd doctrines that ever was imposed
 “ on mankind.—It is an absurd and horrid doc-
 “ trine; irrational, unscriptural, unnatural, and ut-
 “ terly contrary to all good sense and reason.—Christ
 “ went through the scene of his trial without the least
 “ appearance of any thing like agony of mind.—
 “ No pious person under the Old Testament was at
 “ all acquainted with the atonement.—Pardon of sin
 “ is always granted without regard to the sufferings
 “ or merit of any being whatever.* —The Word
 “ and Spirit of God are only his power and energy,
 “ and not distinct persons.—Nothing is more plain
 “ than that all the Trinitarians are under a strong
 “ delusion.”

One would suppose, from these declarations, that
 this learned man was deputed the oracle of the
 Christian

*See a good account and defence of the doctrine of the atone-
 ment in the excellent Sermons of the Rev. Robert Hawker, just
 published, p. 222—232.

Christian world; that the Almighty had bestowed upon him an inquisitorial spirit to correct all former misconceptions; and that all who have been esteemed great and learned before, are now no more to be accounted of. Dr. Priestley is the man; and all our Miltons, Grotiuses, Tillotsons, and even Clarkes must bow before him.

Let the intelligent Reader consider well the above declarations of this dogmatical Divine, and then ask himself—Where is the candour, modesty, humility, and other virtues, which constitute and adorn the faintly character, to be discovered? Moses and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the atonement for sin by the death of the Son of God, together with all the great and learned defenders thereof in every age, are treated with equal indignity. But—I check myself. The Reader will weigh seriously the tendency of all these expressions, and then judge whether it be the Trinitarians, or the learned Doctor, who are under a strong delusion. To our own Master, however, we must each of us stand or fall. Dr. Priestley ought, nevertheless, to suspect, that there is a *possibility* of his being mistaken; and that other men may have understandings as strong and as clear as his own, with an equal share of sincerity, and an equal degree of love to the pure and unmixed truths of the gospel of Christ. At all events, rashness

ness and enthusiastic zeal for the shibboleths of a party are unbecoming the character of any man, who has the smallest pretensions either to sound religion or philosophy.

SECTION IX.

IN further answer to all these fanatical assertions,* I will oppose here, the sober and solemn declarations of a few truly learned and valuable persons, Dr. Priestley himself being judge. They speak a language diametrically opposite to the above of his, and, as it appears to me, in a spirit essentially different. The language of Dr. Priestley is rash, haughty, confident, intemperate, indecent, enthusiastic; the language of the following witnesses to the catholic truths of God's word, is firm, modest, diffident, and worthy of men who are delivering their opinions upon a subject, of all others the most profound. *The meek will be guide in judgment, and the meek will be learn his way.* The Reader will compare the *spirit* of the foregoing declarations

* Dr. Priestley is in England what the Jacobin levellers are in France. And were he properly supported he would play us the same game. His principles both religious and political bear a near resemblance. The fanaticism of these people may be clearly seen by the reception they gave the Doctor's son, and grows more and more conspicuous daily. Every true Englishman would sincerely rejoice at the emancipation of that great people; but it is exquisitely painful to see them plunging into so many of the fooleries of the German Anabaptists, whose conduct is recorded in the beginning of these Strictures.

clarations of Dr. Priestley with that of these that follow, and judge. I desire nothing from him but a fair and sober determination.

The very learned and pious Bishop Bull speaks thus:—" I own freely I may be mistaken, but I deny that I intended to deceive any one. I am fully persuaded, and that upon mature consideration, of that which I have endeavoured to prove to others; namely, that all the approved fathers and doctors of the church, to a man, who were before the council of Nice, even from the days of the Apostles, taught the very same thing, although sometimes, perhaps, in other words, and another manner of speaking, which the Nicene fathers determined concerning the Son's divinity, against Arius and other heretics."

That eminently skilful and profound Divine Dr. Barrow, speaks thus:—" That there is one divine nature or essence, common unto three persons incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every divine perfection, each different from other in order and manner of subsistence; that there is a mutual inexistence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant;

" an

¹Defen : Fid. Nic. apud. Pref. ad Lect.

“ an eternal generation, and an eternal procession
 “ without precedence or succession, without pro-
 “ per causality or dependence; a Father imparting
 “ his own, and the Son receiving his Father’s life,
 “ and a Spirit issuing from both, without any divisi-
 “ on, or multiplication of essence; these are noti-
 “ ons which may well puzzle our reason in con-
 “ ceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our
 “ faith in asserting that they are true; upon which
 “ we should meditate, not with hope to compre-
 “ hend, but with disposition to admire, veiling our
 “ faces in the presence, and prostrating our reason
 “ at the feet of wisdom so far transcending us.”

Nay, even Dr. Clarke, who has usually been con-
 sidered as not perfectly orthodox on the subject of
 our Saviour’s divinity, yet insists on the necessity
 and reasonableness of the doctrine of Christ’s atone-
 ment, and calls it “ the main and fundamental article
 “ of the Christian faith.”—“ It is therefore,” adds
 he a little afterwards, “ plainly agreeable to right
 “ reason to believe that God, in vindication of the
 “ honour of his laws, and for a testimony of his
 “ hatred against sin, should appoint some sacrifice
 “ or expiation for sin, at the same time that he
 “ forgives the sinner upon his true repentance.”

Mr.

‘Defence of the Trinity, p. 7, 8.

²Discourse on the Being and Attributes of God, part 2. p. 194,
 195.—Chevalier Ramsay in his Discourse of the Theology of the

Mr. Locke likewise tells us, "that it is very hard
" for a Christian, who reads the scripture with at-
" tention, and an unprejudiced mind, to deny the
" satisfaction of Christ."

The late excellent Bishop of Norwich is not less
positive upon this subject than either of the former:
—"I declare before God," says he, "in the sincer-
" ity of my soul, upon the best judgment I can
" form, I am verily persuaded, that the doctrine
" of our Lord's divinity is really the doctrine of
" the scriptures, and of the primitive church.—In
" this faith I propose to live, and for this faith, if

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" called

Pagans tells us, that "in order to silence the incredulous, and
" make the mystery of the Trinity intelligible to them, a famous
" Doctor of the church of England (Dr. Clarke) and, as I am
" assured, the greatest Philosopher of modern times (Sir Isaac
" Newton) believed that it would do no prejudice to the faith, to
" consider the three persons of the Trinity as three individual
" agents, or three distinct beings, though of the same substance.
" This opinion is as far above Arianism, as Arianism is above So-
" cinianism. Fausto-Socini maintained, that the Son had never
" any existence before the incarnation. Arius held, that he was
" created or produced out of nothing like finite beings, but yet
" from all eternity, that is, before all time. The learned Dr.
" Clarke maintains every where, that the Word is not a creature,
" but an emanation from the Father, co-eternal and consubstantial;
" that this emanation is as essential to the Deity as his veracity;
" that it is not possible for the Father to be without the Son, in
" any other sense than it is possible for God to lie; and conse-
" quently, that the Word is not a precarious being which God
" may annihilate."

This is the view which this learned Foreigner gives of the senti-
ments of Dr. Clarke. How far it is just, or otherwise, I undertake
not to determine.

¹Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of
Christianity, p. 668.

“ called upon, I shall, I humbly trust, be prepared
“ to die.”²

To these we may add the solemn declaration of a most learned Foreigner, the celebrated Michaelis, Professor at the university of Gottingen in Germany:—“ I profess before God,” says he, “ and upon the word of an honest man, that I believe
“ Christ to be true and eternal God and the Jehovah.—It is a truth infinitely dear to me.”³

To these six attestations I will add those of two or three other gentlemen of rank and learning indisputable:—Sir Francis Bacon says, speaking on the same subject, “ I believe, that in the fulness of
“ time, according to the promise and oath, of a
“ chosen lineage, descended the blessed seed of the
“ woman, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of
“ God, and Saviour of the world; who was conceived by the power and overshadowing of the
“ Holy Ghost, and took flesh of the Virgin Mary
“ —so that the eternal Son of God, and the ever-blessed Son of Mary, was one person.”⁴

The late Soame Jenyns, Esq. was for many years an avowed deist, and is well known to have been a man of considerable talents. By some means, he was convinced of his error, became a Christian, and wrote in defence of the gospel. He,
one

²Two Sermons on the Faith and Trinity, p. 30, 31.

³Lectures on the New Testament, sect. 151.

⁴Confession of Faith.

one should suppose, would be a fair and impartial judge of the contents of the New Testament. What then was his opinion of these doctrines against which Dr. Priestley makes such a lamentable outcry, but which the great body of the Christian world consider as the foundation of all our future hopes? Speaking of the Trinity he says—"That there
 "subsists some such union in the Divine nature,
 "the whole tenour of the New Testament seems
 "to express, and it was so understood in the ear-
 "liest ages."

And a little after, speaking of the atonement which Christ made for the sins of the world upon the cross, he says:—"That Christ suffered and
 "died as an atonement for the sins of mankind, is
 "a doctrine so constantly and so strongly enforced
 "through every part of the New Testament, that
 "whoever will seriously peruse those writings, and
 "deny that it is there, may with as much reason
 "and truth, after reading the works of Thucydi-
 "des and Livy, assert, that in them no mention is
 "made of any facts relative to the histories of
 "Greece and Rome."

The late Lord President Forbes also, who was a man of very considerable attainments, assures us,

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"the

⁵View of the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion,
 p. 27. 3. edition.

⁶Ibid. p. 29.—See also some fine reasonings upon these subjects
 in the same little work, p. 159—170.

“ the gospel informs, precisely and formally, that
 “ though the Godhead is essentially one, yet there
 “ are in the Divine Essence three persons, equal in
 “ perfection, the Father, the Son, and the Holy
 “ Spirit: that the Son, to satisfy essential justice,
 “ took on him flesh, was united to the humanity,
 “ suffered for sinners, made atonement for them,
 “ raised the man to whom he was joined, from the
 “ dead, glorified him with himself, and is to make
 “ continual intercession for sinners.—That this is
 “ true, every Christian believes.”

SECTION X.

THE Reader will now compare these most respectable testimonies with the preceding assertions of Dr. Priestley, and judge for himself concerning both one and the other. In the mean time we will go a little farther with the learned gentleman's bold assumptions:—“ He doubts
 “ whether there be any such extraordinary being as
 “ the devil⁷—is clear our Saviour did not believe
 “ the existence of evil spirits”⁸—rejects whole verses, and even whole chapters in the bible, when they make against his favourite opinions—
 is

⁷Thoughts concerning religion, p. 139.

⁸Letters to Dr. Price, p. 163.

⁹Disquis. on Mat. and Spirit, vol. 1. p. 168.

¹Hist. of Cor. vol. 2. p. 368.—Dr. Priestley assures us (if we will take his ipse dixit for the truth of the declaration, which, thank God, we have no need to do, seeing we have the bible in our

is positive that "the doctrine of a soul has no foundation in reason, or the scriptures"²—assures

us

hands, and are possessed of common sense and common learning as well as he) that the New Testament contains no such doctrines as those of the Trinity and Divinity of Christ. But that the Doctor is mistaken upon this, as well as upon many other occasions, notwithstanding all his real merit (which I am as willing to allow as any man) is pretty evident, because both the Jews, Mahometans, and many of his own Socinian brethren, are of a different opinion; the Jews declaring those doctrines *are* in the New Testament, while the Mahometans and Socinians insist they were *not there originally*, but have been foisted in since by the Trinitarians. Upon this principle Enjedinus, the Socinian, rejects the whole epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, as apocryphal. He found himself, like Alexander, unable to loose the Gordian knots, which it contains, and therefore, like him also, he took his critical sword and cut them without fear: he rejected the whole. Another of these gentry, dissatisfied with Socinus's exposition of the introductory verses of St. John's gospel (and what sober critic can be satisfied with it?) rejects the whole passage as spurious. Sommerus and Francis David reject the whole book of Proverbs, as apocryphal, because it ascribes a Son to God. And Dr. Priestley himself, not approving the miraculous conception, rejects the two first chapters of St. Matthew's gospel, and the two first of St. Luke's.³—We may say, however, with confidence and triumph, in the words of the learned Jortin, that "the books of the New Testament have descended to us uncorrupted in any thing material. This appears evidently from the quotations which have been made out of them by Christian writers in all ages—from the high esteem and veneration in which they have ever been held—from the multitude of copies and early translations, which left no room for fraud or inattention to do them any important injury—and from the various readings themselves, which, for the most part, are of small consequence."

Discourses on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 198.

²Letters to Dr. Horne, &c. p. 72.—More able men than Dr. Priestley are of a very different opinion. Dr. Jortin, for instance, among many others, is decidedly an advocate for the reality of a human soul. "Man, is an immortal creature. So say both reason and revelation; they mutually agree in asserting this important truth, and twist a twofold cord which is not to be broken."—Sermons, vol. 6. p. 204.—See the whole of that excel-

³See Allix's Judgment, p. 426—430.

us “ none of the ancient prophecies give us any
 “ reason to expect more than a mere man in the
 “ Messiah ”³—declares that “ the Apostles never
 “ taught any other ”⁴—that Jesus “ Christ is never
 “ once called God in all the New Testament, not
 “ even

lent discourse.—See also the second of Dr. Bentley’s admirable Sermons at Boyle’s Lecture, where all that Dr. Priestley and our other Materialists can advance against the immateriality of the soul is amply and ably refuted.—Consult likewise Wollaston’s Religion of Nature, sect. 9.—Bishop Butler’s Analogy, part 1. ch. 1.—Dr. Clarke’s Discourse on the Being and Attributes of God, part 1. page 75, and part 2. page 113—121.—And Dean Sherlock’s Discourse on the Immortality of the Soul, where all Dr. Priestley’s flimsy arguments are completely refuted and overthrown. The learned Dean justly observes, that “ a Christian,
 “ who believes the gospel, is in no danger of the philosophy of in-
 “ fidels; for the authority of God is above all reason and philoso-
 “ phy : but if we set aside revelation, and dispute with them upon
 “ equal terms, the event is doubtful.—All such disputes are a trial
 “ of skill between man and man, and their personal abilities and
 “ qualifications : and if an infidel happen to be a wittier man, and
 “ better philosopher, than a Christian, the victory is like to go on
 “ that side ; and the Christian who lays aside his faith may be
 “ baffled in his philosophy, and that too often endangers the re-
 “ nouncing his faith.” Chap. 1. sect. 1.

This learned Divine very properly resolves all the great doctrines of religion into the will of God, as revealed in holy scripture. He does not reject the arguments from nature and philosophy, but he wisely refuses to rest the cause upon them. “ Thus
 “ saith the Lord ”—“ thus saith the Redeemer of souls ”—or
 “ thus saith St. Paul ”—is infinitely preferable to the vague, and,
 too often, sophistical reasonings of vain philosophers, and conceited dabblers in science, *falsely so called*. And, to apply the observation to the case in hand, I would observe, that there are three single passages in the New Testament, which subvert most completely every thing that Dr. Priestley has laboured to establish, on the materiality of the soul, in his “ Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit.”—These three passages are—Mat. 10. 28.—Luke 16. 19—31.—Ibid. 9. 28—36.—No man can *fairly* resist this evidence.

³Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, vol. 1. p. 361.

⁴History of Corruptions, vol. 1. p. 6.

“ even in the lowest sense of all ”—that “ we find
 “ nothing like divinity ascribed unto him before
 “ the time of Justin Martyr,” who suffered for the
 faith in the year of our Lord 167^e—that Irenæus
 never charges the Ebionites as heretics, but only

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expresses

“ Letters to Burn, p. 7.—Dr. Price might well say to his friend,
 when speaking of the Socinian interpretations of scripture, “ I must
 “ own to you, that I am inclined to wonder that good men can sa-
 tisfy themselves with such explanations.”

Sermons, p. 135.

How different to these three last assertions of this learned man
 are the declarations of Dr. Clark and Mr. Whiston? The former
 says, in his Reply to the Objections of Robert Nelson, Esq.—“ The
 “ Son is, by communication of Divine power and dominion from
 “ the Father, *really and truly God*.” Page 50.

Again:—“ He is really and truly God.” Page 52.

Again:—“ The Son is true God, by communication of divinity
 “ from the Father.” Page 62.

Again:—“ That the Father’s being, by way of eminence, the
 “ one God, does not exclude the Son from being truly God, by
 “ true communication of divinity from that one unoriginated God
 “ the Father, I readily acknowledge.” Page 69.

Again:—“ Christ is truly God, because he has true divinity
 “ derived to him from the Father.—He is truly good, by having
 “ the Father’s goodness communicated to him without measure.”
 Page 91.

Again:—“ Irenæus very justly styles Christ true God, and truly
 “ God,—by having received from his Father true divinity and
 “ dominion over the whole creation.” Page 106.

And again:—“ Christ is by nature truly God; as truly, as
 “ man is by nature truly man.” Page 81.

The latter, in his Council of Nice vindicated from the Athana-
 sian Heresy, says, “ Jesus Christ is truly God and Lord.—This
 “ Christian article is agreed to by all the three parties, Eusebians,
 “ Athanasians, and Arians; as also that he is a God by nature,
 “ and was such before his incarnation, nay, before the creation of
 “ the world; and not only by office, or appointment afterwards,
 “ as the old Ebionites and modern Socinians have been forced to
 “ affirm.”—Page 8.

“ Hist. of Cor. vol. 1. p. 32.

expresses a great dislike of them⁷—that the genuineness of our present copies of the Epistles of St. Ignatius “is not only very much doubted, but “generally given up by the learned”⁸—that “no “critic of any name in the last age pretended to “find any difference between the ancient Nazarenes and the Ebionites”⁹—that “no authority “whatever, ancient or modern, is to be produced “for that opinion of the origin of the Son from “the Father’s contemplation of his own perfections”¹⁰—and that, “should a man be found who “really believes in a future life of retribution, and “governs his conduct by that faith, so as to be as “perfect a character as a Christian, he scruples not “to say, that to him Christianity would be superfluous.”¹¹

When I read these various and confident declarations of this learned gentleman I am all astonishment. Professing himself a Christian, we expect to find sincerity and truth in all his serious declarations, at least. How powerful then must be the bias of his mind, towards the system he has espoused, to be capable of such rash and erroneous assertions? May we not retort the words of the Doctor to Mr.

Hawkins

⁷Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Albans, p. 56.

⁸Letters to Dr. Horley, p. 13.

⁹Do. p. 23.

¹⁰Do. part 2. p. 34.

¹¹Animad: on White’s Sermons, p. 72.

Hawkins upon himself, and say — “ I now see
 “ that there is something in the *doctrines of Socinus*,
 “ which has more power than I was aware of, to
 “ blind the eyes of men, in other respects honest
 “ and ingenuous; and to produce a degree of self-
 “ delusion almost equal to any thing, that we see
 “ in Bedlam? This makes me thankful to God,
 “ that my situation and circumstances have been
 “ different from *his*. For I am far from thinking,
 “ that either my understanding, or my heart is na-
 “ turally better than *his*. But what must we think
 “ of a system, which has such power of perverting
 “ the best faculties and dispositions that God has
 “ given to man! Let all those, who are happily
 “ out of the influence of its fascination join in the
 “ most ardent prayers, and the most earnest, but
 “ peaceable endeavours, for the demolition of it.”³

This address of the Doctor's, is, in my opinion,
 not more applicable to any set of men upon earth
 than it is to himself and his Socinian brethren.
 For, be his learning and abilities what they may, it
 must be most evident, I think, to all impartial men,
 that he is either very ignorant,⁴ very hasty, and
 intemperate

³Letters to Mr. Hawkins, in his Defences of Unitarianism for
 the years 1788 and 1789.

⁴A man may be a very able experimental philosopher, and yet
 profoundly ignorant of various other branches of knowledge. Dr.
 Priestley's learning is said to be general; but, in most branches, su-
 perficial. It is very evident, that when he wrote his History of
 the Corruptions of Christianity, he was far from being well inform-

intemperate in his conclusions ; or, being deceived himself, he labours to deceive others. That he is ignorant in these matters cannot be conceived: that he designedly contradicts and perverts the truth, charity forbids us to suppose: we must therefore conclude, that he himself is deceived by his enthusiastic zeal to promote the system he hath espoused. Hence all his bold assertions so absolutely contrary both to truth and matter of fact. That this is the case I appeal still farther to the judicious Reader, by a review of several of these propositions, which have been just mentioned. And,

1. "None of the ancient prophecies give us
"any reason to expect more than a mere man in
"the Messiah."

Let the Reader turn to Gen. 3. 15.—Psalm 110.
1.—Is. 9. 6.—Jer. 23. 6.—Micah 5. 2. besides
various

ed upon the subjects he undertook to discuss ; seeing few works were ever laid before the public, which contain more frequent and important instances of inaccuracy. The Doctor should, therefore, be more modest in his pretensions, and less dogmatical in his assumptions. Men of minds truly enlarged, of attainments any how considerable, and of pious humble spirits ; men who have for a number of years been conversant in the best authors, and who have drunk deep into the mind that was in Christ, feel themselves incapable of such intemperate assertions. Let the Doctor be allowed all the merit to which he is justly entitled. He is a laborious man. His attainments are undoubtedly very considerable, and in many respects he surely has great worth. But yet let him not affect that to which he is not equal. Whoever pretends to an acquaintance with the various branches of learning, must be superficial upon some, and consequently liable to considerable mistakes on those subjects, whenever he attempts to lay his thoughts upon them before the public.

various other places, and he will find the Doctor does not speak according to truth.

2. "The Apostles never taught any other than the mere humanity of Christ."

So says Dr. Priestley. But let the Reader turn to the following passages, and he will find there is little dependence to be placed upon the Doctor's word, when he is warmed with controversy: Mat. 1. 23.—Ibid. 11, 27.—Ibid. 28, 18, 19.—John 1. 1—14.—Ibid. 5. 17—29.—Phil. 2. 5—11.—Col. 1. 14—17, and many others.⁵

3. "Jesus Christ is never once called God in all the new Testament, not even in the lowest sense of all."⁶

This

⁵For other passages of scripture in proof of the pre-existence, super-humanity, and divinity of Christ, see these Strictures page 41—43.

⁶In this respect as well as in several other Dr. Priestley goes much greater lengths than his predecessors in the same cause; for "they own, that the name of God is given in holy scripture to Jesus Christ; but contend, that it is only a deputed title, which invests him, however, with an absolute sovereignty over all created beings, and renders him an object of worship to men and angels."—New and Gen. Biog. Dict. art. F. Socinus, vol. 11. p. 468.

It should be observed here, that all the Socinians of the sixteenth century were not of this opinion: for they soon split into two parties, and a warm controversy was carried on between Socinus and some of his learned disciples. "Tanta est discordia fratrum."

Now that I am speaking of a difference of opinion among the Socinians of the sixteenth century, we may go a little farther and give a short sketch of the state of the variations which have prevailed among the enemies of the orthodox faith, both before and since that time. They all claim the truth as their own. Every one is eager to make converts to his particular opinions; and yet, though they are perfectly agreed in their opposition to the divinity

This is another of the Doctor's assertions. Now let the Reader consult Mat. i. 23.—John i. i.—14.—Ibid. 20. 28, 29.—Acts 20. 25.—Rom. 9. 5.—Heb. i. 8, and some other passages, and then let him judge according to evidence.

4. " We

of Christ, and its concomitant doctrines, they differ as widely almost from each other, as they do from the Orthodox themselves. It will be a question, therefore, if we must desert the faith once delivered to the saints, to which of these various parties we must unite ourselves. And this is a question which must be previously settled. And till this is settled wise men will be extremely cautious how they renounce the deity and atonement of their Saviour. Ebion was the first who held our Lord to be a mere man. Cerinthus supposed there were two persons in Christ. In the following ages arose Theodotus, Artemon, Beryllus, Paul of Samosata, and some others, who all agreed in denying our Lord's divinity, but each of them had new and singular opinions of their own. Nor were the Arians in the fourth century better agreed. "The members of this sect," says Mosheim, "were divided among themselves, and torn into factions, which regarded each other with the bitterest aversion." For, rejecting the creed agreed upon at Nice, they successively drew up many others; if I mistake not, no fewer than seventeen in the space of forty years. And are our modern opposers of the divinity of Christ all united in their sentiments? By no means. Dr. Clarke seems to suppose he was begotten from eternity. See *Scripture Doctrine*, p. 247. Others held that he was begotten before the worlds, but not from eternity. Socinus and Dr. Priestley will have it, that he had no existence whatever before his conception in the womb of the Virgin. Socinus says he is called God. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey say he is not called God. Some say he created the world and appeared to Moses and the Patriarchs. Dr. Priestley insists upon it he neither created the world, nor appeared as the other suppose. Some of the ancient heretics assure us he had no human nature, no body, no soul; others he had no divine nature. Some said he was begotten of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Priestley insists he was the natural son of Joseph and Mary. Dr. Clarke allows the Son to be invested with distinct worship in his own person. *Script. Doct.* p. 338. Dr. Price insists that religious worship is to be confined to God the Father only. See *Sermons*, p. 101. Socinus, though he contended that Christ was a mere man, yet could not allow

4. "We find nothing like divinity ascribed to Christ before the time of Justin Martyr."

This is another of the learned gentleman's bold declarations, and has as little truth in it as any of the former. To pass over the Epistles of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and other ancient monuments prior to that period, let the Reader only be at the trouble of reconsidering those several passages of scripture to which I have already referred him under the former propositions, and he cannot fail of satisfaction.

5. "Irenæus never charges the Ebionites as heretics, but only expresses a great dislike of them."

So says Dr. Priestley. But let Irenæus speak for himself:—"The authority of the gospels is such, that even the *heretics* themselves bear witness to it, since each of them endeavours to confirm his own doctrine from those writings. For the *Ebionites*, using only the gospel according to St. Matthew, are by that convicted of error in their

them to be Christians who denied him religious worship, and, it is said, persecuted Francis David even unto imprisonment for denying adoration to the Saviour. Dr. Priestley, however, withholds this adoration from the Redeemer, contends there is another more glorious Messiah to come, and seems to divest Jesus Christ of the chief honour as universal Judge at the end of the world. From all these considerations, I think, we may justly say with the late very learned Dr. Waterland, that "the several kinds of heresies which have affected this scripture truth, are but the various wanderings of human imagination. Truth is simple and uniform, while error is almost infinite." Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 325.

“ their notions of our Lord. Marcion, cutting off
 “ much of the gospel according to St. Luke, may
 “ be proved a blasphemmer against the only God,
 “ from the parts which he retains.” This asser-
 tion is conclusive. What authority then is due to
 the Doctor’s declaration ?

6. Dr. Priestley says, “ the genuineness of our
 “ present copies of the Epistles of Ignatius is not
 “ only very much doubted, but generally given up
 “ by the learned.”

If

‘Lib. 3. cap. 11.—See this opinion of Irenæus proved at large
 in Bishop Horsley’s Tracts, p. 434—457. where he sums up the
 evidence in the following manner :—“ It appears that the Ebio-
 “ nites are repeatedly mentioned by Irenæus, and never mention-
 “ ed but as heretics. When any heavy charge against heretics is
 “ to be confirmed by particular instances, the Ebionites seldom are
 “ forgotten. In the first book, they appear in a list of heretical
 “ sects, as one instance among many confirming the author’s ge-
 “ neral assertion, that all the heretical sects, of his own and the
 “ preceeding age, had their root and origin in the doctrines of Si-
 “ mon Magus. In the third book, they are mentioned as one in-
 “ stance of heretics, who, rejecting the greater part of the four
 “ gospels, contribute to the general evidence of the authenticity
 “ and credit of those writings, by their solicitude to build their
 “ particular opinions upon the parts which they receive, and yet
 “ are convicted of error in those opinions, by those very parts to
 “ which they appeal. In another passage of the third book,
 “ they are described as persons in a state of impenitence and har-
 “ dened infidelity, lying under the dreadful sentence of eternal
 “ damnation. In the fourth book, their sect is mentioned among
 “ those, whom the Spiritual Disciple, that is, the sound believer,
 “ will judge. In the fifth book, they are mentioned among here-
 “ tics, whose doctrines are demolished all in the lump, and at one
 “ blow, by being contrasted with the scheme of man’s redemption
 “ truly stated. And in another passage of the same book, their
 “ distinguishing tenet of the mere humanity of our Lord is alledged
 “ as an instance of the ignorance and blindness of heretics, and of
 “ the forwardness of such persons to oppose their own salvation.”

If Dr. Priestley's assertion may pass for argument and truth, the seven Epistles of Ignatius we see are *generally* given up by the learned. But—is it so? Is this the fact? By no means. Dr. Priestley may give them up because they subvert that system of doctrine, which he is determined to support at all hazards: and a few others may join him in crying them down, because they maintain the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons: but that they are *generally* given up by the learned is a notorious untruth. For it is well known, that a large majority of the learned in ecclesiastical antiquity consider the epistles in question as the genuine productions of the pious bishop and martyr to whom they are ascribed: Nor is there any good reason to think, that they have suffered more by the hand of time or interpolation than other writings of the same antiquity. Let this be, however, as it may, these seven celebrated epistles are considered as genuine, for any thing that appears to the contrary, by all the learned Fathers of the church for the first four or five centuries; by those very Fathers from whom we receive the holy scriptures themselves as the true and infallible word of the Most High. And of those learned men, who have lived since the Reformation, they have been considered as authentic by some of the most celebrated in this department of literature. In this number are to be ranked the names of Fabricius—J. Vossius—Usher—
Hammond

Hammond—Brucker—Huetius—Ittigius—Peta-
vius—Grotius—Pearson—Bull—Cave—Wake—
Cotelierius—Grabe—Dupin—Fleury—Tillemont
—Bochart—Le Clerc—Nelson—Reeves—Leslie
—Hickes—Marshal—Beveridge—Chillingworth
—Waterland—Zanchius—Buddæus—Bishop—Ber-
riman—Clarke—Moshiem—Lardner—Bingham
—Randolph—Jortin:—and indeed the great body
of the learned in every age have been fully of opini-
on, that these epistles are the genuine work of the
author to whom they are ascribed. With what
face then can Dr. Priestley say, they are *generally*
given up by the learned?—The case is plain—it
doth not suit the Doctor's hypothesis to admit them.
—But then—where is truth, fidelity, and honour?
It is by arts like these Voltaire explodes even the
bible itself.*

7. “No critic of any name in the last age pre-
tended to find any difference between the anti-
cent Nazarenes and the Ebionites.”

So says Dr. Priestley. But in this also he is
mistaken. For it is well known that both Grotius,
Vossius, Spencer, and Huetius, who all lived in the
last age, and who were all critics of name, main-
tained a distinction between these two sects. The
learned

*For the authority of these celebrated Epistles of Ignatius—See
Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. 120—Archbp. Wake's Apostol: Fa-
thers—Dr. Clarke's Reflections on Amyntor—And Bp. Pearson's
Vindiciæ.—See also Bp. Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith,
c. 2. s. 6.—Likewise Eusebius's Eccl. Hist. b. 3. c. 36.—Con-

learned Mosheim of the present age has done the same.¹ Whether justly or unjustly concerns not us to enquire. I only mention the circumstance to satisfy the Reader how little credit is due to Dr. Priestley's most positive declarations.

8. "No authority whatever, ancient or modern, is to be produced for that opinion of the origin of the Son from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections."

This is another of the Doctor's bold assertions. But bishop Horsley hath made it appear, that several of the Christian fathers, various of the Schoolmen, Melancthon, the most learned of all the Protestant reformers, besides several more, were of this opinion, and prove the fallacy of Dr. Priestley's declaration.²

9. "Should a man be found who really believes in a future life of retribution, and governs his
F f "conduct

sult moreover the Notes to Kett's Sermons, p. 21—24. "These Epistles," says this last gentleman, "are some of the most curious and valuable remains of apostolical antiquity. It is no wonder that the Socinian is eager to overthrow their authority, when not only every page, but almost every sentence must convince him of his erroneous opinions."—This last expression is somewhat too strong and hyperbolical: but assuredly Ignatius's Epistles and Socinianism cannot stand together. And therefore we may say with an unknown Author—"Dr. Priestley is certainly in the right to reprobate these Epistles, if he can; they subvert all his theology and history."

Bp. Horsley's Tracts, p. 300.

¹ See Ditto, p. 127, 128.

² See Ditto, p. 458—476.

“conduct by that faith, so as to be as perfect a character as a Christian, to him Christianity would be superfluous.” — So says the Doctor. Now this declaration seems to me to militate against the whole tenor of the scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ. I will only produce two or three passages of holy scripture, and leave them to the consideration of the serious Reader.

Jesus saith unto his disciples—*I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*³

Again:—*Verily, verily I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door unto the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. And then Christ adds—I am the door of the sheep.*⁴

St. Peter declares:—*Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*⁵

I will add the testimony of St. Paul:—*There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*⁶

Again:—*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*⁷

Dr. Priestley is here most evidently against the bible, and the bible against Dr. Priestley. The Reader will judge to which credit is due. The Doctor's proposition is sheer deism.

Upon a review of all these particulars, I cannot help observing, that I know of no respectable

writer

³John 14. 6.—⁴Ibid. 10. 1, 7.—⁵Acts 4. 22.

⁶1 Tim. 2. 5.—⁷Heb. 9. 22.

writer so like to Dr. Priestley in rash and unfounded assertions as the celebrated Voltaire.* No man ought to read either one or the other, as I have observed in another place, without much previous knowledge and caution. They are neither of them to be trusted, even in their most solemn declarations, on subjects where their minds are prejudiced. Their zeal carries them beyond all bounds. Truth is sacrificed to party views, and their boldest assertions are not to be regarded by the friends of candour and moderation. We have seen already how fallacious some of the Doctor's are: Voltaire's are not less so, in abundance of instances. He loses all patience when he speaks of the Jewish nation and the holy scriptures, just as Dr. Priestley does when he speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, with the divinity and atonement of Christ. I will produce two or three declarations of this French infidel, to justify these assertions, and leave the Reader to judge how little regard is due to any thing he advances upon the mere credit of his own veracity.

He says then—"In all the annals of the Hebrew
F f 2 " nation

*" It must be allowed, that the enemies of Christianity attack it with some advantage on their side, from the light temper of the age, and from possessing those qualities which are suited to its temper. In their writings they display ingenuity, vivacity, gaiety; they are sparing of grave argument, or rather seem to despise it. They have invented a mode of investigation extremely alluring to the indolent and unexperienced: they assert boldly, conclude rashly, and put on an affected negligence, when they talk of religion.—Such is Voltaire."

Hunter's Observations on the History of Christ,
introd. p. 11, 12.

“ nation, we do not meet with a single generous
“ action.”

In opposition to this assertion, see the story of Joseph's conduct to his brethren in the book of Genesis:—Moses' conduct to the Israelites, Ex. 32. 9—13.—Ibid. 32. 31, 32, and Num. 14. 11—19:—Jonathan's conduct to David 1 Sam. 19 and 20 chapters:—and Daniel's to the wise men of Babylon, Dan. 2. 24.

To these instances of generosity, such as Voltaire himself was never capable of imitating, might be added many others from the Jewish history, of a similar kind, were it necessary; but these are amply sufficient to prove, that Voltaire was a man to whom credit cannot always be given with safety.

Again:—“ There are no marks of politeness, or
“ science, or of any improvement in the arts; to be
“ met with among these atrocious nations”—the
Hebrews.*

In answer to this intolerable falsehood, I refer the Reader, who has curiosity enough to investigate the business, to the “ Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire.” They are both instructive and entertaining. The hoary Infidel cuts but a very poor figure in them. I entreat the admirer of this French philosopher to do himself the justice to read
carefully

*Voltaire's Works by Williams and others, vol. 1. p. 68.

*Ibid. vol. 1. p. 69.

carefully and consider soberly these very able and politely written letters.*

SECTION XI.

WE may moreover observe here, that Dr. Priestley is equally intemperate in his theology and politics. For, having used his best endeavours to undeify his Saviour, and annihilate his Sanctifier; to fallibilize the scripture, and degrade the sacred writers from the rank they have usually held in the esteem of mankind; to unsaint the primitive Fathers, and to saint the ancient heretics; he proceeds in his political career to predict, and to triumph in the expectation of, the subversion of the constitution of his country both in church and state. Kings and Bishops are bugbears to the Doctor, and he is determined, as far as lies in his power, to exterminate them from the face of the earth. "We are," says he, "as it were, laying gunpowder under the old building of error and superstition,

Ff3

" which

*Consult also the Rev. Robert Findlay's Vindication of the Sacred Books from the misrepresentations and cavils of this celebrated Infidel.

See Barnard's Letters to Dr. Priestley likewise, for a glaring misrepresentation of Tillemont on the conduct of Constantine, at the council of Nice, by the Doctor, p. 145 and 149.

Dr. Priestley asserts also, that Irenæus has never quoted the Shepherd of Hermas, in any of his five books; which assertion is well known to be contrary to matter of fact.

See moreover another remarkable mistatement of facts by the Doctor, respecting the seventh book of Clemens Alexandrinus' Stromata, in Bp. Horsley's Tracts, p. 185—190, and Gentleman's Magazine for Feb. 1791, p. 101.

“ which a single spark may hereafter inflame, so
 “ as to produce an instantaneous explosion; in
 “ consequence of which, that edifice, the creation
 “ of which has been the work of ages, may be
 “ overturned in a moment, and so effectually, as
 “ that the same foundation can never be built
 “ upon again.”³

Again:—“ A small change in the political state
 “ of things, such as no man can foresee before it
 “ actually takes place, and which may be at no
 “ great distance, may suffice to overturn the best
 “ compacted establishments at once, before the bi-
 “ goted friends of them suspect any danger.”⁴ All
 the friends of orthodoxy are bigots, in the opinion
 of Dr. Priestley, and all who favour his own theo-
 logical and political sentiments are lovers of truth,
 reason, philosophy, and light!

Again:—“ Things are already in such a train,
 “ that though no person can foresee the particular
 “ time and manner of the change in favour of Uni-
 “ tarianism, we may be as certain of its taking
 “ place, as if we actually saw it accomplished; and
 “ till things are perfectly ripe for such a revoluti-
 “ on, it would be absurd to expect it, and in vain
 “ to attempt it.”⁵—It should seem from this decla-
 ration,

³Import. of Free Inquiry, p. 40, 41.

⁴Ibid. p. 39.

⁵Ibid. p. 41.

ration, that when Dr. Priestley takes it into his head things are perfectly ripe for a revolution in church and state, he will not be backward to lend an helping hand. It is very possible, however, he may be more courageous in his study than he will prove in the field. When he was told the mob were coming upon him at the late unhappy riots at Birmingham, he took to his heels, instead of staying to expostulate with them concerning "The Rights of Man, Liberty, and Equality," as a true Philosopher ought to have done. And when this Revolution business comes on—these will be glorious times!—which he is in such anxious expectation of, the Doctor may happen to find his courage fail him again. For he may be assured there are men to be found, who, when duty calls, will not be backward to try his prowess in the field of Mars, as well as in polemical discussion.

Again:—"It has been said that if the Dissenters gain this point (the repeal of the corporation and test acts) they will aim at something more. This I acknowledge. We should ask many things more, because there are many things more that we conceive ourselves entitled to.—We feel them to be burthens, and shall take every fair opportunity of endeavouring to relieve ourselves.

F f 4

" Let

“ Let the bench of Bishops be fully apprised of this, and take their measures accordingly.”⁷

And again:—“ It is nothing but the alliance of the kingdom of Christ with the kingdoms of this world (an alliance which our Lord himself expressly disclaimed) that supports the grossest corruptions of Christianity; and perhaps we must wait for the fall of the civil powers, before this most unnatural alliance be broken. Calamitous, no doubt, will that time be. But what convulsion in the political world ought to be a subject of lamentation, if it be attended with so desirable an effect?”⁸

It is evident from these several declarations, that Dr. Priestley is straining every nerve to subvert the constitution of his country.⁹ Every man, therefore, who is satisfied with the present state of things, and wishes not for a return of the puritanical times, or to see this kingdom involved in the horrors of a civil war, as is now the case with our neighbours, should take all proper steps to counteract the insidious designs of the Doctor and his friends. Till very lately, the members of the Establishment seem to have been asleep, dreaming no danger is at hand, while they are sowing their tares, laying their trains of gunpowder, dispersing their inflammatory pamphlets,

⁷Letter to Mr. Pitt, p. 20.

⁸Corruptions of Christ. vol. 2. p. 484.

⁹See a just account of the excellence of the constitution of England in Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws b. 11. c. 6.

lets, and exerting all their influence to make the common people dissatisfied with the conduct of their governours. They meet, associate, raise funds, advertise, buy books, and spread them gratis^o to all who are disposed to read. I could earnestly wish some measures of a similar kind were adopted by those who are the friends of the present constitution, in all our populous towns, where the Dissenters are particularly busy in their seductive arts. Though every man, who thinks at all upon the subject, must see that there are several things in the constitution of this country, which might, possibly, be

“^oThe republican landed and monied gentry of the north of Ireland, have, it is said, circulated 20,000 Paine's Rights of Man at twopence a-piece.”

See Sir Brooke Boothby's, Bart. Observations on that Work, p. 185.

The society for constitutional information, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Friday June 15th. 1792, ordered twelve thousand copies of Paine's Letter to Mr. Secretary Dundas to be printed, and distributed throughout Great Britain.

There are various answers to Mr. Paine's publications, especially to his “Rights of Man.” The above of Sir Brooke Boothby's is amply sufficient. Not that he condemns every thing in that work, for undoubtedly Paine advances many important truths. But upon the whole, “The Rights of Man” is a very sophistical and pernicious book, calculated to mislead *superficial* thinkers, and to involve this happy and flourishing country in all the horrors of a civil war, and all the destructive consequences of a national bankruptcy. Let the admirer of Paine's book look at France at this present moment, September 18th. 1792, and bless himself that he has his abode in England. Let him moreover do himself the justice to read coolly, if he *can* read coolly, an able answer to Paine's book, entitled, “A Protest against T. Paine's Rights of Man.” It is a valuable little work, and has run through four editions in a short time. No other answer need be read. It is sold by Longman, price (only) one shilling.

be altered for the better, yet, I believe, there is good sense enough among the great bulk of the people, to discover when they are well and happy. They will not therefore be disposed to risk a certainty for an uncertainty. They will be content to wait, *doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with their God, and not speaking evil of dignities*, till Providence shall think proper to meliorate the state of things. Some government there must be.¹ Some persons must be in power. The simple question therefore is, whether we shall continue our present mixed form, of King, Lords, and Commons, which has

¹Whoever considers well the dreadful convulsions which were perpetually taking place in the Grecian and Roman commonwealths, and weighs thoroughly the vast superiority of this country to all the commonwealths now in being, both in riches, power, freedom, and happiness, will have little inclination to risque a change. The woman in Prov. 14. 1. is not spoken of as the wisest of women, who *plucked down her house with her own hands*, to save others the trouble. And should the inhabitants of this country be persuaded to do like her, instead of the kingdom of God immediately appearing, (which many of our canting enthusiasts seem to think would be the case) a very Babel would arise in consequence. If the experience of the present wrong-headed levellers in France, those philosophical deists and atheists, (as Dr. Priestley informs us they most of them are) and if, moreover, the experience of the last century in this kingdom cannot make us wise, most certain it is, that we never shall become so. Happy are they whom other people's misfortunes make cautious. Some of the greatest men in France have been deceived in their unhappy business. Many of the same description were last century deceived in this country. And the Italian proverb says, If a man deceives me *once*, it is his fault; if *twice*, it is mine. Let us not hesitate, therefore, between a legal and mild government under King George, and a usurped government under a mob of petty tyrants, with some wretched Cromwell at their head. If we are called to look at America as a model of a happy government—I reply—Let us wait a century before we give a decided opinion upon that subject.

has been considered by many of the most experienced politicians as the perfection of government, or whether two of the branches of the legislature shall be swallowed up by the third, and we reduced once more to a Commonwealth, with a few tyrannical despots at the helm of affairs. This is the present struggle. The existing state of things must be subverted: Kings, Lords, and Bishops banished: Christ Jesus dragged from his throne: The Holy Spirit annihilated: The human soul materialized: Dr. Priestley and his *enlightened* friends brought into power: and then this restless gentleman will be satisfied.² But, notwithstanding all his sanguine expectations, and all the exertions of his inflammatory co-adjutors,

²Dr. Priestley makes a lamentable outcry concerning the late unhappy riots at Birmingham, and *pettishly*—not charitably, neither *philosophically*—accuses the whole town and neighbourhood, high and low, of being concerned in the dismal business, and involved in the guilt. Surely this is an atrocious accusation. The Doctor's spirit is too much agitated to judge candidly. But he is excusable. The treatment he met with was undoubtedly unjustifiable, upon any principle either of religion or sound policy, and the loss to the philosophical world may never be repaired. But according to the principles of retaliation the Doctor met with no more than he justly deserved. A man who treats the laws, the religion, the governours, and the government of his country as Dr. Priestley has done, can have no right to expect the favour of those governours, or the protection of that government. The Jury at Warwick assizes were so sensible of this, that they refused to allow the Doctor any damages for the burning of his numerous manuscript compositions, though these, in all probability, were, in his own estimation, the most valuable part of his property. Mr. Hardinge, the council employed against him, gave them such a specimen of the pernicious tendency of the writings which the Doctor has already published, by a variety of extracts from them, that they could no longer consider those that were still in embryo as of any positive value.

co-adjutors, I humbly trust, and firmly believe, the nation is not yet so infatuated as to be prepared for this change. A vast majority of the people are well satisfied with our present governours. And every man, that is so satisfied, should endeavour to diffuse his own peaceful sentiments among the people all around him. There are a few cheap low-priced books that might be dispersed among the common people with good effect. If I could afford it I would at my own expence send them into every family in Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Norwich, and every other large town where the Dissenters are exerting their influence to raise commotions in the minds of the people. The books I here allude to are—on religious subjects—The late bishop Horne's two excellent Sermons on "the Duty of contending for the Faith," and "the Trinity in Unity;" and "A Preservative against the Publications dispersed by Modern Socinians:"—on political subjects—"Historical Memoirs of religious Dissension;" and "A Look to the Last Century; or the Dissenters weighed in their own Scales." Whoever seriously reads the two former of these little pamphlets will have little inclination to embrace Dr. Priestley's Socinian principles: And whosoever candidly considers the contents of the two latter, together with the "Protest against T. Paine's Rights of Man," before mentioned, will never wish to see any convulsion or revolution

revolution in the constitution of this country, especially if it is to originate with the gentlemen who are so strenuous for a republican form of government.

If it be enquired whether I myself see no need of a reformation?—I ingenuously answer—I do.—And whether I am *perfectly* satisfied with the constitution of this country both in church and state?—Certainly not.—Many things, in my judgment, might be altered for the better. And I doubt not but such melioration of the state of things will *gradually* take place. But I see no defects of that magnitude to render it advisable to convulse the kingdom, and to plunge ourselves into a civil war, for the sake of them. We have much to lose, and little to gain.*

A peaceable, temperate, internal reform of the decayed parts of the constitution, whether in church or state, is what no real friend to his country could have any solid objection to. The Constitution has already received many such from the spirited efforts of individuals, from the combined talents of united patriots, and from the progressive wisdom of ages. But then these improvements have been dictated by experience and guided by prudence. “They were not the fantastical theories of wild philosophical speculatists, intoxicated with the vanity of overturning whatever was established. They were real improvements, meriting the approbation of the

*See a small Pamphlet entitled “A Word in Season to the Traders and Manufacturers of Great Britain.”

“ the wise, the support of the brave, and the affectionate attachment of every friend to his country.*”

SECTION XII.

I HAVE now thrown a few of the curious sentiments of this philosophical Divine into one view, and made such observations upon them as occurred to my mind as we went along. Pretensions to novelty they can have little, seeing most of them are found in the writings of Chubb, Tindal, Socinus, and other authors of a similar description. What is more remarkable, I think, than any of his opinions, is, that, with all his fanatical assumptions and indecent dogmaticalness upon theological subjects, of which here are ample specimens, he himself is the veriest weather-cock that ever existed. A few years ago, he was, by his own confession, successively, a strict Calvinist—a Trinitarian—an Arian—a high

*The public papers have just informed us, that Dr. Priestley and Mr. Paine are elected members of the national convention in France. Mr. Paine, it seems, is gone. Whether Dr. Priestley will think proper to accept the honour the Jacobins have done him, we are not yet told. If he does, I sincerely wish he may be instrumental in the hands of Providence in teaching them to believe in God, and in Jesus Christ whom he has sent; to do justice, love mercy, and repent for all the innocent blood which they have shed.—The Almighty has evidently a quarrel with that great nation. I hope he will scourge them in measure. And when he hath accomplished his displeasure upon them, that he will bring order out of confusion, and cause happiness to spring from their present misery. They seem too much enlightened ever to submit to an arbitrary government again. If they deserve liberty they shall have it. But they have lately given us many horrible specimens of their demerit. They seem resolved to destroy every great man from among them, unless he is as mad as themselves.

a high Socinian—and now he is a low Socinian—and he still declares it doubtful whether his creed be yet fixed. “ I shall not be offended,” says the Doctor, “ if you should account for my roving
“ from one opinion to another, by supposing, that
“ I have a temper of mind too hostile to every thing
“ that is established; or if you should say, that I am
“ more apt to be satisfied with any thing belonging
“ to myself, than with my opinions, and that I am
“ not likely to fix long in any scheme.”

“ It

“ Letters to Dr. Horsley, pref. p. 5.—I have often been struck with the description of the ancient Heretics, given by an anonymous Author, in the latter end of the second, or beginning of the third century. How far several parts of it are applicable to some of our modern Sectarists the Reader will judge :—“ They have boldly,” says this Author, “ adulterated the holy scriptures; they have rejected the rule of the primitive faith; and have been ignorant of Christ. They are not inquisitive after that which the sacred writings declare, but bestow much labour and pains in finding out such syllogisms as may confirm the scheme of their impiety. And if any one proposes to them a text of the divine scriptures, they examine whether a connective or disjunctive form of a syllogism may be made of it. Leaving the holy scriptures of God, they study geometry. Being of the earth they speak of things earthly; and are ignorant of him who comes from above. Therefore amongst some of them Euclid’s geometry is studied with great application. Aristotle and Theophrastus are admired. And Galen, in like manner, is by others of them almost adored. Why need I say that these persons (who make use of the arts of infidels for the confirmation of their erroneous opinions, and by the craft of atheists debase the true authority of the holy scriptures) are at the greatest distance from the faith? Hence it is that they have rashly laid their hands upon the sacred writings, saying, that they ought to be corrected. Whoever is desirous may easily be informed that I speak not this falsely of them. For would any one examine the copies of the scriptures which they have collected together, and compare them one with another, he would find that they differed very much one from another: For the copies of Asclepiadotus agree not with those of

“ It is certain,” continues he, “ that, so far
 “ from having much fondness for the opinions that
 “ I received from my education, I have gone on
 “ changing, though always in one direction, from
 “ the time that I begun to think for myself to the
 “ present day, and I will not pretend to say when
 “ my creed will be fixed.”⁶

Where this unstable gentleman means to terminate his retrograde motions, whether with Hobbs, Hume, and Voltaire,⁷ or with Vanini of Italy, Spinoza

“ Theodotus. Many such copies as these may be procured ; because their followers have with much labour and curiosity written the corrections, as they call them, of their several instructors. Again ; the copies of Hermophilus agree not with these just mentioned : and those of Apollonides differ one from another. For whoever will be at the trouble to compare them, will find that those copies first put forth by him, do very much disagree with his other copies, which he afterwards did again wrest and disfigure. How much impudence there is in this wicked action, it is likely they themselves are not ignorant : for either they do not believe the sacred writings to have been dictated by the Holy Spirit, and then they are infidels : or else they account themselves wiser than the Holy Ghost ; and what are they then but fanatics ? For they cannot deny this audacious fact to have been done by their own selves, because the copies have been written out by their own hands ; neither did they receive such copies as these from those who were their instructors ; nor yet can they shew the copies out of which they transcribed these things. But some of them have not indeed been at the pains to adulterate the scriptures, but, having wholly rejected both the Law and the Prophets, by a lawless and atheistical doctrine, under a pretence of grace, they are fallen into the lowest pit of destruction.”

Euseb. Eccl. Hist. b. 5. chap. 28.

⁶ Letters to Dr. Price, p. 167.

⁷ Toland and Tindal, attempting to write in defence of Socinianism, became professed deists, and wrote against the Christian religion.

noza of Holland, and Mr. William Hammon of Liverpool, is impossible for any one yet to say: for we read of some, who are *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; who are like children, carried away with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* And we are told by the same authority, that *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* This unstable temper, these winds of doctrine and slights of men, this cunning craftiness and itch of novelty, may lead the learned Doctor into greater inconveniences than he seems at present to have any apprehension of. Be this, however, as it may, I leave the considerate Reader to judge, if this is not a pretty sort of gentleman to set up for a reformer of all the religions in Christendom? If we must believe such a Proteus-like philosopher, it may be very justly demanded, *when* we are to believe him? for he is extremely warm and positive under every change of sentiment.² One would have hoped

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“ Mr. Whiston, who was himself an Arian, being one day in conversation with Chubb, who was a Socinian, he (Whiston) told him, it would not be long before he embraced deism, and he did so.”

Hurd's View of all Religions, p. 584.

Mr. Whitaker gives us a fuller view of these revolutions of several of the Socinian writers in his “ Origin of Arianism Disclosed,” p. 497—500.

²Letters to Young Men, &c. p. 55, and Animadversions on Mr. White's Sermons, p. 76, et alibi frequenter.

past experience might have made him cautious and modest in his future declarations. But alas! he seems incurable. He is more vaunting, if possible, in some of his late publications, than when he first set out in his polemical career. The lion is roused by the sharp stimulants of the shrewd Arch-deacon of St. Albans, and bishops, professors, and Bampton-lecturers; our Tillotsons, Stillingfleets, and Hurds; nay even your Clarkes, Hoadleys, Whistons, and Prices, are so many mere children before him.³ Indeed, what are arch-bishops, bishops, professors, and Bampton-lecturers? Moses
and

³Dr. Priestley makes his boast, that very few of the patrons of orthodoxy, and almost none of the advocates of Arianism, step forward to vindicate their respective schemes. Let the Doctor be told, that the reason of their silence is, probably, not what he supposes it to be. He imagines the patrons of the two schemes distrust the ground on which they stand, or that they are afraid of encountering his rare polemical abilities. In both these suppositions, I apprehend, the Doctor is mistaken. The reason of their silence is very different. If I might be permitted to answer for them, it should be in the words of a letter inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1789, which I will transcribe at length.

“ Mr. Urban,

“ In page 10, is a letter from Dr. Priestley on the controversy which has for some time been carried on between him
“ and his several antagonists. He still, I perceive, continues to
“ write with his accustomed assurance, and to boast of his numerous victories over the advocates of orthodoxy, though repeatedly foiled by those advocates. But be it known unto this
“ doughty champion, that his opponents desist not from the controversy because impartial men suppose they have received an
“ overthrow, but because they are perfectly satisfied, that Dr.
“ Priestley has been proved *incompetent* in the business of Christian antiquity by his more learned adversary, the Bishop of St.
“ David's—that enough has been already said on the doctrine of
“ of the Holy Trinity, to convince any candid impartial person,

and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, are every one treated with like indignity. They all fall down confounded before this mighty antagonist of heaven:*

“ O’er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he *rides*

“ Of thrones, and mighty Seraphim prostrate.”

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But—

“ by Bp. Bull, Mr. Leslie, Dr. Waterland, Dr. Allix, Mr. Jones, Bishop Horsley, Mr. Badcock, and others; a’l whose books are in the libraries of the learned—that the subject under debate is in very good hands, if the precipitate Doctor will vouchsafe indulgence in the article of time—that Dr. Priestley sets aside most of the principles of just interpretation, and by that means can make any thing of any thing—and, lastly, that whoever enters into a controversy with him must expect to carry on an eternal war; and, moreover, be insulted on every occasion with mock triumphs: for to confute him and to silence him are very different matters. The Doctor ought to know, Mr. Urban, that wise men will be satisfied with having said all that is necessary to convince *bumble* enquirers after truth, rather than to be forever cavilling for the sake of victory. Besides, experience has taught his opponents, that he has an advantage they were little aware of, and which falls to the share of but very few; he can fight as well upon his back as upon his legs, and is of that wonderfully heroic spirit, that, let them knock him down ever so often, he will spring up again, call them fools and blockheads, and shout, Victory! Victory! and will never yield the day but with his last breath. I am therefore of opinion, that Dr. Horsley never displayed his good sense to greater advantage, than when, having said *enough* upon the question in debate, and proved Dr. Priestley’s incompetency, he disregarded, in silent contempt, the fresh challenges and provocations of his baffled adversary. For, seriously, Mr. Urban, were my learning and abilities ever so much superior, I would as soon encounter Thermites in loquacity, as the vaunting Doctor in controversy, upon any subject whatever.”

*Dr. Priestley has lately written a History of the Christian Church, in which, Mr. Burges tells us, he has given “ the most defective representations. I say defective,” continues he, “ because defective in essential circumstances, and partial, because consistent with the opinions of one part only, and that much the smallest part of those, who profess themselves to be Christi-

But—Dr. Priestley and his friends are learned men, and must know what are the true doctrines of the gospel.—

So was Spinoza a learned man, and yet he was an atheist: So was Voltaire a learned man, and yet he was a deist: So was Socinus, and yet he believed Jesus Christ was called God in holy scripture; worshipped him as such; and could hardly allow them to be Christians who refused him religious adoration: So was Mr. Whiston, yet he was an Arian, and for many years a strenuous opposer of the Socinians:—So was Baron Swedenborg, yet he was a Sabellian: And so are infinite numbers of excellent persons, who differ *toto cælo* from Dr. Priestley, and our other vaunting Unitarians, in their

“ans. It might have been expected from an historian of the
 “Christian Church, that in his account of the origin of the Christi-
 “an religion, he would not have omitted *any* very distinguishing
 “particulars relating to the personal character and authority of its
 “Founder. But Dr. Priestley has omitted the *most* distinguishing
 “particulars in the life and conversation of Jesus Christ. He says
 “nothing of the extraordinary circumstances of his birth, nothing
 “of his many discourses with the Jews and his disciples respecting
 “himself and his commission; and has *misrepresented* the nature
 “of the charge, on which, he was condemned to the cross. The
 “miraculous conception shews, that Jesus Christ had no human
 “father; yet Dr. Priestley calls him the son of Joseph, and says
 “nothing of his birth.”

Sermon on the Divinity of Christ, p. 45.

“Modest men, and sincere enquirers after truth, are ever to be esteemed, however they may differ from us in opinion: but vain, noisy, over-bearing, shallow disputants, who are evermore disturbing the company into which they are admitted with their political and religious nostrums, are to be had in detestation by all good men of every persuasion. A proud, haughty, boasting,

their religious sentiments. It may be added too, that the Apostate spirit, is, probably, more knowing by many degrees than the wisest divine or philosopher in the universe; and yet, with all his superior wisdom and knowledge, he still continues an enemy to God, and his only-begotten Son.⁶ Considera-

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vain-glorious spirit, is an infallible criterion of any man's being fundamentally erroneous. However just his speculative opinions may be, he is practically, morally, and religiously wrong. I have always considered the rule, laid down by the eminently pious Mr. Hervey, whereby to judge of the truth of our views of religion, as a very good one, and I still see no reason to be of a different opinion. "That doctrine," said he, "which tends

" To humble the sinner;

" To exalt the Saviour;

" To promote holiness;

" That doctrine, which tends to accomplish *all* these designs, you may embrace as sound. That which is defective in its influence on *any one* of them, you should reject as corrupt."

Theron and Aspasio, dial. 8.

⁶Though it is highly unbecoming both the man and the Christian to plead the authority of great names for what we are to believe; yet there is as much reason for the Orthodox to glory in the name of a Bacon or a Boyle, a Milton or a Grotius, a Bull or a Waterland, as for the Socinians to make their boast of such men as they think an honour to their cause. The fact is, neither on one side nor the other, is *mere* human authority to be much regarded. Every man must seek out truth for himself, and get the best evidence for his opinions that he can. One good and substantial reason is worth twenty great names. We ought however to be very careful how we dissent in matters of importance from serious, candid, learned, and religious men. If a man is a meek, humble, lowly, serious, judicious, learned, and well-informed man; and if his whole life, conduct, and tempers, bespeak him sincere and in earnest in his religious concerns; I should be very unwilling to dissent from his opinions on any of the great doctrines of redemption. Indeed I should not dare to do it without the most earnest and impartial investigation. And I would observe, on the other hand, that no man's sentiments on the leading truths of the gospel are of any great weight or importance, in my judgment, whose character

tions of this kind, however, can have little or no weight with Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey, seeing the former doubts of the existence of the devil, and the latter is persuaded there is no such being.⁷ This is fine news for the sinners in our Sion! But on those, who believe the holy scriptures, considerations like these will have an influence becoming the importance of the conviction.

But—Dr. Priestley⁸ is a moral man, and a man of just worth and estimation.—

So

does not answer the above description. The names of Bishops, Lords, Dukes, and Kings, or even Philosophers, merely as such, are of extremely little moment with me, where the truth of religious opinions is concerned. Nothing upon earth can supply the place of humility and serious godliness.

⁷Dr. Price is of opinion there are angels both good and bad: See his Sermons, p. 122.—Dr. Priestley doubts of the existence of devils: See Letters to Dr. Price, p. 163.—But Mr. Lindsey is positive there is no devil, no satan, no demons: See *Vindiciæ Priestlianae*, pref. p. 6.

In answer to Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey on the subject of the existence of the fallen angels, I would only request the serious Reader to consult his bible. It is full of the doctrine. See especially, Mat. 10. 1.—Ibid. 25. 41.—Mark 5. 8, 9.—John 8. 44.—2 Cor. 11. 14, 15.—James 2. 19.—2 Pet. 2. 4.—1 John 3. 8.—Jude 6.—Mr. Lindsey and his learned friend may doubt and deny the doctrine—as what doctrine has not been doubted and denied?—But I defy them both to disprove it. I wish they could. They would perform a task extremely acceptable to mankind. They would deserve an honour much higher than that of a seat in the national convention of France, to which the latter of these gentlemen, it seems, is invited.

“⁸I have often been told,” says a pious writer, “that Dr. Priestley is a moral man, and have heard his sincerity highly commended, I suppose, in justification of his principles, or, at least, to lessen the censure which might be expected for the singularity of his opinions. He may be a very moral man, and his life, I doubt not, reproach the loose conduct of many, who

So was Voltaire; so was Spinoza; so was Mr. Whiston; so was Baron Swedenborg; and so are multitudes of those learned and virtuous persons, who hold the religious principles of Dr. Priestley in the utmost abhorrence. We should always bear in mind, that something more is necessary to constituting a truly religious character besides the negative virtues. A man may be very proud, yet very temperate; very conceited, self-righteous, and wise in his own eyes (witness the Scribes and Pharisees) who is constitutionally free from all the grosser vices of human nature. In some men the vices of the body prevail: in some the vices of the mind: and in others both have the dominion. If we suppose that either great learning, or strict morals, are sure criterions of truth, we shall be led into strange absurdities: for men of the most contradictory

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"speculatively at least, maintain sounder principles: but this is no evidence, that he is either right or safe. Some men are constitutionally sober; and this, in an age of dissipation, of licentiousness and irreligion, is enough to acquire the reputation of being virtuous; especially, if this sobriety be accompanied with zeal for religion. A dissipated, irregular conduct will not consist with the views of a student, who is forever writing for the public. And they who venture to oppose established doctrines and broach heterodox opinions, find it necessary to put on sheep's clothing in order to gain attention and credit, and to give weight to their own system; or, at least, to prevent the alarm, which the apprehension of any dangerous tendency in their principles might occasion."

Jesse's Defence of the Church, p. 151, 152.

opinions have been both one and the other.⁹ Great learning, properly used, is good: strict morals are essentially necessary to true religion: but great learning is no sure protection from destructive error; nor are strict morals, commonly so called, an infallible

“⁹If the question should be put, whether it be not, upon a general consideration, a greater crime to propagate heresy, or corrupt the true faith of Christ, to say nothing of infidelity, than to lead an irregular, or vicious course of life? We must affirm that it is; as being a crime, at once, of a more dangerous, and a more diffusive influence. It must be allowed, that he who poisons the fountains of natural religion and morality, if we may judge of his crime by the direct, and malignant effects of it, is much more criminal, than a mere immoral man: because his principles tend, if they be not so designed, to introduce an universal corruption of manners, and to destroy the very grounds and reasons of moral virtue in every kind. Heresies, in like manner, which tend to overthrow the doctrines of revealed religion, and especially if they be industriously propagated to that end, import more flagrant guilt, than a neglect of conforming ourselves, in other respects, to the rules of that religion. An heresiarch, in a word, when opposed to a bad Christian, is as a Julian or Celsus, upon the comparison, with a mere practical Pagan.

“They are imposed upon, therefore, by a great fallacy, in their way of reasoning, who pretend, that men are not, in so high a measure, accountable for heretical notions, which yet they openly advance, as for a bad life; or that a man may more safely corrupt the faith of Christ; than be corrupt in his morals. For they do not state the case right, nor make a just comparison. Should any one lay down principles to justify impurity, or excess in eating or drinking, and so be a heretic (if the manner of expression may be allowed) in morality; such a one might, we grant, render himself more obnoxious and detestable, than a heretic, with respect to points properly theological. But, as the comparison is made, between a heretic and a bad immoral man; the question comes to this, whether it be not more dangerous, or do not argue, in the attempt, a greater depravation of mind, to corrupt the faith of the whole church, than to lay an occasion before certain particular persons of scandal, or perhaps of a guilty compliance, by a simple example.

infallible test of our being fundamentally right. We have had atheists, deists, and heretics of every description, both learned and moral. Nothing under heaven can supply the place of profound submission of soul to the dominion of the Son of God. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.*

I would not, however, be misunderstood in speaking of Dr. Priestley's change of sentiments: for to change sentiments may sometimes be a proof of wisdom and patient investigation. Rarely will a man be found, who is a consistently religious character, that has not had occasion to change some opinion or other.¹ But, in the name of common sense,

“ It is not then without reason, that some persons are acted by
 “ a stronger zeal against heretics in opinion, than against liberties in practice ; the preservation of the whole being of greater
 “ consequence, and more to be consulted, than the preservation of
 “ a small, or, in any degree, of a less part. While principles remain firm and unshaken, though men may act contrary to them,
 “ there is something still left to reduce them, and to prevent the
 “ defection of others. But when foundations are cast down, nothing but confusion and every evil work, can be expected to follow. I shall, upon all these accounts, take occasion to infer the
 “ necessity of a becoming zeal for preserving the purity of the
 “ faith, against all innovations whatever, as a necessary and indispensable duty. A duty, indeed, expressly enjoined in the
 “ holy scriptures, which require, and with which sanction I shall
 “ therefore enforce this inference, that we should *earnestly contend*
 “ *for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints ; and hold*
 “ *fast the profession of it without wavering.*”

Fiddes's Theologia Speculativa, b.⁴ c. 1.

¹Mr. Toplady is an extraordinary instance to the contrary. “ It is not the smallest of my distinguishing mercies,” says this able

sense, what is a sober Christian to do amidst all these revolutions of religious views, and high pretensions to superior light and information? Must he rashly conclude there is no such thing as truth, that it is in vain to seek after it, or that it is of no consequence what principles we embrace, if our lives are moral? This would be a conclusion equally fallacious and dangerous. It would be fallacious, because there surely is such a thing as truth, whether we may be happy enough to possess it or not: it would be dangerous, because it annihilates at one stroke all the duties of the first table of the law. A determined deist, or an avowed atheist,² may be a moral

man, "that from the very commencement of my unworthy ministrations, I have not had a single doctrine to retract, nor a single word to unsay."

Caveat against unsound Doctrines, p. 18.

Some of my Readers will probably be of opinion, that it would have been much to this gentleman's honour to have retracted several of his doctrines, and unsaid many of the intemperate things which he advanced in the course of his polemical career.

²Spinoza, whom Bayle calls "the greatest Atheist that ever lived," is generally allowed to have been a sociable, honest, friendly, and good moral man. He was first a Jew, then a Christian, and then an Atheist. Notwithstanding his principles, he was moreover temperate, liberal, disinterested. He said nothing in conversation but what was edifying; never swore; never spoke disrespectfully of God.—How much more becoming was his conduct herein, than that of many of our modern Socinians, who are upon every occasion treating the doctrine of the holy and undivided Trinity, and the divinity and atonement of Christ, with the most indecent language, and the most scurrilous contempt? Dr. Priestley, in particular, has been extremely blameable in this respect. The foregoing Strictures contain abundant instances of the learned gentleman's indiscreet and fanatical zeal,

moral man; and, from one motive or another, a punctual observer of most of the duties of the second table. But shall we therefore conclude, either that there is no God, and no Saviour; or that it is unnecessary we should pay any regard to their existence, and the precepts they have enjoined?

SECTION XIII.

AMIDST all these jarring opinions, contradictory sentiments, and high pretensions to truth, what is a serious observer to do, it may be very reasonably asked, in order to arrive at a competent knowledge of the great doctrines and duties of natural and revealed religion? Here are, we have seen, both Atheists and Deists,. These, as well as the more plausible among the several sects of Christians, put in their claim to truth, and require us to give them a dispassionate hearing. And, what is remarkable, each, even of these denominations, hath found men of considerable talents and respectability to espouse its cause. Vanini and Spinoza, as well as young Servin, were unquestionably persons of some abilities and learning. Indeed men of ordinary talents rarely go out of the common way. But shall we therefore conclude, that these bold and ardent spirits, who neither fear God nor regard man, are right, that all the rest of the world hath ever been deluded, and that there truly is no Supreme Being? Shall we not rather say with the royal Psalmist,

Pfalmist, what is really the truth, that it is only *the fool who hath said in his heart; There is no God?* For who but a fool could make any such stupid declaration? seeing that there exists a supreme and intelligent Governour of the World, all “nature crys aloud through all her works?”

But, several of the Atheists³ were considerable men, and men of no mean attainments.—Be it so. Shall we, therefore, out of a silly, misguided, and irrational charity, annihilate our God, and forfeit every expectation that is dear among men? Shall we pay the compliment of singular wisdom and discernment to a few wretched Atheists, at the expense of the wisdom and discernment of all the world besides? If there are a few lusi naturæ in every department

³We have many very excellent treatises written to prove the being and perfections of God against the Atheists. Besides several others, the following are excellent:—1. Dr. Clarke’s Discourse on the Being and Attributes of God. 2. Mr. Wollaston’s Religion of Nature Delineated. 3. Bishop Wilkins’ Principles and Duties of Natural Religion. 4. Mr. Ray on the Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation. 5. Dr. Derham’s Physico and Astro-Theology. 6. Dr. Bentley’s Sermons at Boyle’s Lecture. 7. Archbishop Tillotson, on the Wisdom of being religious, vol. 1. ser. 1.—7. Dr. Nieuwentyt’s Religious Philosopher. 8. Mr. Wesley’s Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation. 9. Fenelon’s Demonstration of the Existence, Wisdom, and Power of God.—I might add many more; but these are all excellent in their kind, and any one of them sufficient to confute all the Atheists that ever lived, upon the principles of fair and impartial reasoning. And if reasonable beings will not submit to fair and impartial reasoning, man can do nothing with them; they must be left to the God who made them, and whose existence they deny. He is able to convince them. And to him they shall go for that purpose.

partment of the works of God, shall we be so infatuated and absurd as to conclude, these are the only genuine productions of nature, and all the rest, a million to one, are monstrous births?

If this cannot be admitted with respect to Atheists, what shall we say to the Deistical gentry of the age? The former reject the existence of a God, the latter the existence of a Saviour. The Atheist laughs at the Deist, and the Deist despises the Atheist.* The holy scripture, however, that grand charter of all our dearest hopes and expectations, treats them both with nearly the same severity. For whatever pretences they have, and whatever qualifications they possess (and it is granted some of them have many pretences, and possess various
and

“ *When David Hume was at Paris, some conversation on religious subjects is said to have passed between himself and Messrs. D’Alembert, Diderot, and other sublime geniuses, remarkable for their noble contempt of those narrow notions and vulgar prejudices which debased the understanding of a Bacon, a Newton, and a Locke. In the course of the conference, it was discovered, that Hume did not go quite so far in the unbeliever’s creed as some of the company. He contended for the existence, and for the moral government, of a Deity. After he left the room, one of the philosophers being asked what he thought of Mr. Hume, replied, that he certainly was a man of an enlarged and liberal turn of mind, and that it was a great pity, that he had not been able wholly to divest himself of superstition, and to shake off the remaining prejudices of his education.” *Monthly Review* for August, 1792, p. 375.

Thus, we see, the Atheist accuses the Deist of superstition for believing there is a God; the Deist will accuse the Christian of superstition for believing there is a Saviour; and the Socinian will accuse the Orthodox of superstition for believing the divinity and atonement of that Saviour.

and shining qualifications) surely they labour under a very culpable infatuation of mind, and the word of God seems to leave them without any manner of excuse. Moses, speaking of the advent of Messiah, declares, that God will be highly displeased with those who reject him. *Whoever, says he, will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.*⁵

The royal Psalmist also represents the Heathen as opposing the kingdom of David, and of Christ, whom David prefigured, and exhorting them, on pain of the Messias' utmost displeasure, to submit themselves to his dominion:—*Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.*⁶ The same sentiment, nearly, only expressed with greater force, occurs in the 110th. psalm:—*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Indeed this whole psalm seems to be a prediction of our blessed Saviour's victories over the enemies of his church. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*—*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedeck. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the Heathen,* notwithstanding all their opposition,

⁵Deut. 18. 19.

⁶Ps. 2. 12.

sition, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies: he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

The language of Isaiah is similar:—*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else: I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*¹

John the Baptist hath spoken in a stile equally peremptory:—*The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*²

St. Paul assures us, that *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*³

St. John is not less positive:—*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*⁴

St.

¹Is. 45. 22—25.

²John 3. 35, 36.—³1 Thes. 1. 7, 8.—⁴John 5. 12.

St. Peter confirms the same testimony:—*The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*²

And, lastly, our Saviour himself hath declared the same things upon various occasions:—*God so loved the world, says he, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.*³ It ought, moreover, to be well considered, that his commission to the Apostles when he left our earth was:—*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*⁴

Nothing can be stronger and more absolute than these declarations, all which apply so directly and alarmingly to the Deists of every age and country. Our own nation has produced many, and some of very considerable abilities and attainments. It is impossible not to call to mind, with sincere concern,

²1 Pet. 4. 17. 18.—³John 3. 16—18.—⁴Mark 16. 15, 16.

cern, such men as Herbert, Shaftsbury, Chubb, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, and others, who have attacked the gospel with all their learning and ingenuity. France,³ we have seen, swarms with Atheists and Deists. It is even said, there are few among that ingenious people, of any consideration, who do believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. The corruption of their religion, the liveliness of their natural tempers, the most artful, insinuating, and poisonous writings of that arch-infidel Voltaire, have, in conjunction, driven the higher ranks of the nation, very generally,

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rally,

³This country has produced a considerable number of very able men in every department of literature. It is a great, enlightened, and powerful nation. The present most horrible and sanguinary convulsions are owing to a variety of causes, and some of them pretty remote. The corruption of the national religion, I apprehend, is the first and greatest cause—the despotic principles of the constitution—the revocation of the edict of Nantes in the year 1685—the bloody wars and enormous expences of the two last kings—the vast debt that was incurred in the late American war—the notions of liberty the soldiery imbibed by mixing with the Americans in that war—the pleasing, yet dangerous writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Abbè Raynal—but—above all,—the judgments of heaven upon the king, nobility, clergy, and gentry of the land, for their treachery, irreligion, hypocrisy, infidelity, and atheism. How the present most cruel and savage struggle will end, God only knows. Let monarchs, however, look at the present state of the king of France, and learn justice and honour to neighbouring nations. And let subjects look at the present situation of many of those men, who betrayed the confidence of the king, and formed the constituent assembly, and know that *there is a God, who judgeth the earth*. The king betrayed us in the business of the American war, and now he is betrayed by his subjects. His friends betrayed the confidence of the king, and now they are given up into the hands of the Jacobins, who have murdered, or banished, many of the most respectable men in the nation.

rally, into downright infidelity. That gospel, however, which they with so much scorn reject, we have seen, pronounces the doom of all such in no very ambiguous language. What allowance may be requisite, in any particular case, is not with us to determine. Of this we may be assured, *the Judge of all the earth will do right*; and no man shall have reason to say, he is cruelly and unjustly treated. Where there is room for apology, that apology shall be accepted, by the indulgent Parent of all his creatures. But surely, *upon the ungodly, who through pride of heart, or in obedience to their unruly passions, cast off the gentle yoke of the Redeemer, he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, this shall be their portion to drink.*

It is evident, therefore, that the situation of Atheists and Deists* is desperate. They have no prospects

*The English language abounds with books of every kind against the Deists. I will take the liberty of putting down the names of a small number for the satisfaction of the less informed Reader, besides those that have already been mentioned in the course of these Strictures. 1. Dr. Clarke on the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation. 2. Dr. Doddridge's Three Sermons on the Evidences of Christianity. 3. Mr. Leslie's Short and Easy Method with the Deists. 4. Dr. Leland's View of the Deistical Writers. 5. Dr. Hartley on the Truth of the Christian Religion. 6. Mr. Addison on the Truth of the Christian Religion. 7. Bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies. 8. Dr. Allix's Reflections on the Books of the Holy Scripture. 9. Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History, with the Supplement.—Any one of these books (and the number might be increased almost without end) is sufficient to establish the authority of the Christian religion, without having recourse to any other. But, perhaps, Grotius, on the Truth of the Christian religion, is the best single book in any language, upon the subject.

pects whatever of favour from the God who made and the Saviour who redeemed them, but what is founded on his uncovenanted mercy and grace. How far, and to whom, and under what circumstances, this will be exercised, or whether it will be exercised in any cases whatever, we know not. This only we know, that *God is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he*: And, *being merciful, he will reward every man according to his works. To them, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, he will render eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good: for there is no respect of persons with God.*

But then, besides atheistical and deistical persons, we have abundance of others, who profess to believe in God and in Christ, whose religious sentiments are as opposite to each other as the east is from the west. And what is very much to be observed, is, that the more wild and extravagant their opinions, the more dogmatical and overbearing they usually are in enforcing the truth and importance of them. The German Anabaptists, we have seen, went astonishing lengths in error and delusion.⁵ The Fifth-Monarchy-Men,⁶ and French Prophets,⁷ were

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equally

⁵See p. 11—19—⁶See p. 19, 20—⁷See p. 24—26.

equally wild and enthusiastic. Asgill¹ and Buchan² seem not to have been much more sober-minded. And what shall we say to the highly illuminated Swedish Baron?³ Toplady and White were in opposite extremes, one being for a very partial redemption, and the other for universal restitution; and yet they were both perfectly right, if their own account of things may be credited.⁴ Then comes in honest Thayer,⁵ who from a Presbyterian clergyman was converted to be a Roman Catholic. Great as the difference is between his former and present self, he considers his new system as perfectly right, while all the rest of Christendom are fatally mistaken; or, if there is any hope of their salvation, it is only in the uncovenanted mercies of God. Next come forward Whiston, Price, and other advocates for the doctrine of Arianism.⁶ They put in their joint claim to the exclusive possession of evangelical

¹See p. 26.—²See p. 27.—³See p. 29—31—

⁴See p. 28, 29.—⁵See p. 32—35.

⁶We have a considerable variety of books in our language written against Arianism. Dr. Waterland's Eight Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lecture, with his Vindication of Christ's divinity, and Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, are all very valuable. Berriman's Eight Sermons at the same Lecture give a very clear Historical account of the Trinity. Dr. Knight's Eight Sermons on the same occasion may be read with advantage. Mr. Jones' Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity is valuable. Of small treatises upon the subject, Bishop Horne's two Sermons, before mentioned, and Mr. Hey's Short Defence of the Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, are as good as any I have seen. Abundance more books might be added in defence of this great doctrine, the divinity of our blessed Saviour, but the above appear to me quite sufficient against the Arian view of things.

evangelical truth. Yet even these differ considerably from each other in their views of the person and office of the Redeemer: For Whiston equally with Clarke seems to have contended for the deity and atonement of Christ, in a certain qualified sense, at least: Whereas Dr. Price, and most of the Arians of the present day, appear not to hold any thing more in the character of Messiah, than some pre-existent, super-angelical nature. The former are now sometimes distinguished by the name of high, and the latter by the name of low, Arians. These, however, notwithstanding this great and important difference, were both extremely positive that they were right. And Dr. Price has the temerity to treat his great master, the profoundly learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, with some degree of superiority, because he was inclined to pay too much honour to the divine Redeemer.*

After the Arians in this country had tried their strength with the Orthodox for many years, and

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with

Against the Socinians may be read—Allix's Judgment of the antient Jewish Church—Leslie's Dialogues on the Socinian Controversy—Dr. Randolph's Vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, and his other pieces on the same subject—Dr. Burgh's Scriptural Confutation, and the Sequel, against Mr. Lindsey—Archbishop Tillotson's five Sermons on the Divinity, Incarnation, and Satisfaction of Christ.—To these may be added Mr. Hawker's Sermons on the divinity of Christ, just published, which I have before recommended. The serious and candid inquirer after truth will find more or less satisfaction in every one of the above authors. Some of them appear to me to be absolutely conclusive upon the subjects on which they treat.

*See his Sermons, p. 87.

with various success, the disciples of Socinus made their appearance in arms. Dr. Priestley⁵ is now deservedly considered as being placed at the head of them. Both the Arians and Orthodox, we have already had an opportunity of seeing, are opposed by him, and opposed with great zeal and ability. The Doctor was first an high, now he is a low, Socinian, verging nearly to Deism. Indeed he has veered about through every point of the compass from high Calvinism to low Socinianism. He treats all who presume to differ from him on the great questions in debate, concerning the nature and offices of the Son of God, as dangerously mistaken; and he expects to stand before the judgment seat of Christ clothed in his own righteousness, and involved in his own virtue.*

Now,

⁵The Doctor is not only a philosopher and divine, but has for some years embarked on the wide and tempestuous ocean of worldly politics. He is mighty zealous, we have seen, to subvert the present constitution of his country, (the excellence of which is the admiration of the most enlightened of the French patriots, and founded on the wisdom and experience of all past ages) and substitute some pretty snug thing of his own forming in its room. One would have less to object to the Doctor, if he only proposed such improvements in the existing state of things as he thought necessary; if he were desirous of dressing off some of the gothic protuberances of our political structure and modernizing the stately building. But what shall we say to a man, who would erase to its lowest foundations York Minster, or Westminster Abbey, under a pretence of their not being exactly in the taste of the present day; destroy, in so doing, many thousands of men, and sink many millions of money, in order to erect a smart, neat-looking, modern, conventicle on the scite of them?

⁶*Meâ virtute me involvo.* Hor.—See the 133 page of these *Strictures* for the Doctor's opinion on our acceptance with God.

I have often thought, there is a striking similarity between the late Mr. Whiston and the present Dr. Priestley, as well as between

Now, under all these various, jarring, and contradictory opinions concerning the nature of Christ, and the doctrines of redemption; what is a serious

H h 4

observer

the latter of these gentlemen and Voltaire. Both men of considerable learning, great integrity, and much zeal, they are equally precipitate in their decisions on men, books, and opinions, and equally defective in solidity of judgment. Mr. Whitaker in his "Origin of Arianism Disclosed," lately published, has given us a very affecting picture of the infirmity of the human mind in the various revolutions of sentiment through which the former of these well-meaning gentlemen circulated in the course of a pretty long life; and has compared the two together with great vivacity. The comparison is worthy of attention. And as Mr. Whitaker's book is a large price, and consequently can come into but few hands, I will transcribe the substance of what he has said upon these two eccentric geniuses in this note. The Reader will hence see, that the greatest pretenders to truth are sometimes the least to be depended upon. Men truly wise are modest and diffident.—

"Let us mark," says this lively writer, "the progress of his Arian life, to shew the gradual advances of heresy, in this weak and worthy man. And the memoirs of his life, as written by himself, will prove the most powerful antidote that we can apply, to the venom of his Arian opinions.

"In June 1708 he first began to be heard of, in that grand center of all national intelligence, London; as a reputed Arian. In the August following, he offered a small Essay on the Apostolical Constitutions, to the licencer of the press at Cambridge; and was refused the licence. In 1709 he actually published a sermon, against the eternity of Hell-torments. So variously was the spirit of error already at work, in his mind! In 1710 he boldly asserted the Apostolical Constitutions, to be of equal authority with the four Gospels themselves; and a tract included in them, and called the Doctrine of the Apostles, to be the most sacred of the Canonical Books. So rapidly was he running his career of wildness! But, in 1712, he published in favour of the Anabaptists; the next year, printed a Book of Common Prayer, that had been reformed the backward way into Anabaptism and Arianism; and two years afterward, set up a meeting-house for the use of it: having strangely drawn up his liturgy, before he had provided his church. All this was surely sufficient for *one* heretick. But the stone of Sisy-

observer to do, that he may not miscarry in the business of salvation, but arrive at the knowledge and experience of saving truth? This is a question of vast importance, and ought to be answered with all possible care.

First,

“ thus could never stand still. In 1723 he published a dissertation, to prove the Canticles *not* a canonical Book of Scripture; in 1727 another, to prove the Apocryphal Book of Baruch, canonical; in the same year another, to prove the Epistle of Baruch to the nine tribes and a half, equally canonical; in the *same* year another, to prove the second Book of Esdras, equally canonical; in the *same* year another, to prove Eighteen Psalms of a second Solomon, equally canonical; in the *same* year another, to prove the Book of Enoch, equally canonical; in the *same* year another, to prove those Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs, equally canonical; and another in the very *same* year, to prove an Epistle of the Corinthians to St. Paul, with St. Paul’s Answer to it, equally canonical. With so much labour of spirit, and so much debility of mind, was this respectable heretick rolling the stone up the hill.

“ With many a weary step and many a groan,

“ Up the high hill he heaves the huge round stone;

“ The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,

“ Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.

“ Again the restless orb his toil renews,

“ Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dews.

“ In 1745, he published his *Primitive* New Testament in English, in four parts; and added a page at the end, exhibiting the *titles* of the *rest* of the Books of the New Testament, *not yet known* by the *body* of Christians. Among *these* were specified, *besides* the works above recited, the Epistles of Timothy to *Diognetus*, and *the Homily*, the two Epistles of Clement to the Corinthians, Josephus’s Homily concerning Hades, the Epistles of Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Martyrdom of Polycarp. He thus, according to *his own* enumeration, enlarged the number of the canonical books in the New Testament, from twenty-seven to—fifty-six. And he seems to me from all, with every degree of candor that can be shown him, to have done as some Eastern Saints are said to do; to have run round in a circle, till he found his brains begin to whirl; and then to have mistaken the giddiness, for inspiration,

First, then, with respect to the doctrines of natural religion, let him attentively consider the frame of the world in general; the frame of his own nature in particular;

“ I take no pleasure in exposing the strange excentricities, of this very amiable and very learned man. My good-nature recoils at it. But it becomes requisite, for the sake of the truth. In a state of probation like the present, the milder virtues must often be sacrificed to the sterner, and man give way to God. I therefore proceed to observe additionally, that in 1749, he gradually reached the highest point of *heretical* perfection.

“ He gravely asserted first, that neither a Bishop, a Presbyter, nor a Deacon ought to be more than—once married; that Primitive Christianity also forbade, either Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons, *to marry at all after their ordination*; and that, in the days of the Apostles, a *fourth* marriage was entirely rejected, even in the *laity*. He also ventured upon the bold presumption, of ascertaining the very year according to the Scripture prophecies, for certain events of the highest consequence to the world; and, such was the ingenuous simplicity of the man, was confident enough to name a year *at no great distance*. Mr. Whiston, he says himself, from the same prophecies still foretells, —the Jews are to be RESTORED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY, —in or before what year, does the reader think?—even before one which *has long passed over our heads*. This throws an air of infinite absurdity, over all that he says. They are to rebuild their Temple, and the Millennium is to commence, before—A. D. 1766. In A. D. 1764, he adds,—Ezekiel’s temple is to be cleansed. And I verily believe, he assures us in another place, Providence is—NOW BEGINNING TO SET UP THE MILLENNIUM. We thus hear the Prophet, most unfortunately foretelling magnificent events, and assigning specific periods to them; when the periods have been already come, and the events are still behind.

“ But such a spirit as Mr. Whiston’s could not stop here. He had nearly run the whole round of theological absurdity. One line only was left untried. This he passed, and completed the circle. In the very *same* year he rose to the audacious licence, of asserting the *FALSHOOD* of some things in St. Paul’s Epistles. His words are these. I cite them, that I may not injure him. What St. Paul says to the Jewish converts, in his Epistle to the Romans, about Original Sin;—seems to have been no part of CHRIST’S REVELATION to him. What are they then

particular; the sentiments of all nations; and the voice of his own conscience. Let him examine the heavens, and the earth, and every object within his reach. In these various works of nature are clearly displayed the existence, intelligence, wisdom, power, and goodness of the Divine Being, with many of the duties and obligations of man. In this conclusion Christians of every denomination are sufficiently well agreed.

Secondly,

“ in the name of Christianity and of Commonsense? They are,
 “ Mr. Whiston tells us, rather certain reasonings of HIS OWN,
 “ accommodated to the WEAK Roman Jews at that time only.
 “ He then calls them, these STRANGE and WEAK reasonings.
 “ St. Paul, he adds, might do this the rather, because he never
 “ appears to have designed such occasional Epistles, as this
 “ to the Romans, for systems or standards of Christianity to the
 “ churches; which indeed had been LONG BEFORE settled upon
 “ SURER foundations and FULLER instructions, as they stand in
 “ the ONLY AUTHENTICK system of Christianity, the Aposto-
 “ lical Constitutions. And he finally subjoins, that, if, after all,
 “ any think that this my opinion *takes away* the *strict inspiration*
 “ of Paul’s Epistles, which they *suppose* of dangerous consequence
 “ to Christianity; I CONFESS it *does* imply, that under what de-
 “ gree of divine conduct or wisdom soever Paul wrote his Epistles,
 “ —yet is THAT degree to be esteemed INFERIOR to what
 “ OUGHT to be PROPERLY CALLED INSPIRATION, such as
 “ the prophets were under in the reception of their prophecies;
 “ which PROPER INSPIRATION, I take to be here GROUND-
 “ LESS, and NEVER PRETENDED TO by ANY writers of the
 “ New Testament, *excepting the prophetick parts* of Hermas, in his
 “ admirable visions, and the *prophetick parts* of St. John, in his
 “ *no less* admirable Revelation. We here see the wilderness of er-
 “ ror, by its own luxuriance of growth, entangling itself more
 “ and more, and shooting more and more savage before us at eve-
 “ ry advance. With a temerity that is the result of insensibility,
 “ and the attendant upon unthinkingness; Mr. Whiston asserted
 “ the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, to have some things in
 “ it, which *seem* to have been no part of Christ’s Revelation to
 “ him. Here, surely, even the foot of injudiciousness and pre-

Secondly, Let him diligently study the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament. In them are fully made known all the moral as well as natural perfections of the Deity. The glorious scheme of redemption by the Son of God is therein clearly displayed; whatever is necessary to be believed,

“ sumption will stop. But Mr. Whiston does not. He goes forward to *defend* this wild dictate of heretical pravity. He distinguishes between the inspiration of the prophet, and the inspiration of the teacher. That alone he will allow to be proper inspiration. The other therefore is not a proper one, and only such as admits of strange and weak reasonings. He thus defends his absurd position, by—doubling and weak redoubling it. He defends it, by—adding tenfold more to it. He involves ALL the Epistles of St. Paul, in the same extravagance of censure. He even goes on in the presumption of blindness, and without seeming to know what his hand is executing at the moment; to involve ALL THE OTHER Epistles, to involve the very ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, and to involve the very GOSPELS themselves, in his ample vortex of reprobation. And what understanding is there among my readers, but must spurn with contempt at such a violent precipitation of folly; and what heart is there, but must sigh with compassion over such an evident sweep of madness?

“ Mr. Whiston came at last, we see, to that grand consummation of the lunacies of heresy, to which we have seen the present Heresiarch of the Dissension, Dr. PRIESTLEY, since come. The Apostle PAUL, says the Doctor, especially if he be the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has STRAINED VERY MUCH BY THE FORCE OF IMAGINATION, to reconcile the Jews to the Christian religion; by pointing out the analogies which he IMAGINED the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion bore, to something in Christianity. Dr. Priestley thus *insinuates* his disbelief in the inspiration of St. Paul, at the beginning of his work. But he *speaks out*, near the conclusion of it. I think I have *shown*, he then adds in a reference to some other work of his, that the Apostle Paul OFTEN REASONS INCONCLUSIVELY; and *therefore* that he wrote AS ANY OTHER PERSON, of his turn of mind and thinking, and in his situation, WOULD HAVE WRITTEN without ANY PARTICULAR INSPIRATION. In this manner did Dr. Priestley, like Mr. Whiston, *begin* with denying the inspiration of St. Paul only.

lieved, known, and done, towards the attainment of everlasting salvation. If he is still at a loss for the meaning of the sacred writings upon any of those topics which seem important; if he is puzzled and perplexed with the contradictory assertions of any of our flaming pretenders to reason and philosophy,⁶ let him not rashly give up all religion, turn universal sceptic, and conclude there is no such thing as truth to be found; but let him rather be-
take

“ And, like him too, he soon stepped forward to deny equally the
“ inspiration of *all* the writers in the New Testament. I have fre-
“ quently declared myself, he says in a passage as comprehensive
“ as it is confident, NOT TO BE A BELIEVER in the INSPIRA-
“ TION, of the EVANGELISTS and APOSTLES as WRITERS.
“ And the *progression* of the audaciousness unites with the termin-
“ ation of it, to show in whose trammels this daring son of liberty
“ is servilely pacing all the while. The Doctor and Mr. Whiston,
“ indeed, have many features of similitude in their character. E-
“ minent in some branches of literature, they had been both bred
“ up in the very bosom of religiousness. They had been both e-
“ ducated, in that great and elementary principle of the Gospel,
“ the doctrine of the Trinity. They both recoiled from the faith
“ of their education, threw off the elementary principle, and de-
“ serted over to the army of the Arians. They then had the wild
“ assurance, to pretend to press the Fathers, those strongest and
“ most strenuous champions for orthodoxy, into the very cause of
“ heresy. Each too has been very like to the other, in confused-
“ ness of thinking, and in distractedness of reasoning, upon the
“ subject. They have gone on, equal in the love of writing, and
“ in the lust of publishing, upon it; still persisting, however confut-
“ ed; still muffling themselves up from conviction, in their own
“ cloudiness of discernment; and still screening themselves from
“ shame, in their own effrontery of writing about it. And they
“ have dreadfully united at last, in this high note upon the scale of
“ absurdity, at which Heresy is mounting up into Deism; that
“ St. Paul, that all the Apostles, that all the Evangelists, reason-
“ ed at times as weakly and as wildly as themselves.”

Page 472—481.—For proof of all these assertions, see Whiston's Memoirs of himself, *passim*.

⁶If he has any doubt upon his mind concerning the authenticity of these divine writings, let him read carefully Grotius on the truth

take himself in earnest prayer to the Almighty, and a thorough examination of the *whole* word of God, comparing one part with another, *spiritual things with spiritual*; and let him not pin his faith on any man's sleeve whatever. Let him recollect, on the
one

of the Christian religion, which is well calculated to give satisfaction on the subject it treats. Various other excellent books, we have before observed, have been written with the same view; but no single treatise, which I have seen, appears to me equal to this. To capable Readers, indeed, Butler's Analogy is one of the most satisfactory books that ever was composed. It scarce can be too strongly recommended. No book ever gave so much ease and satisfaction to my mind under the various fluctuations it has experienced from reading the contradictory and plausible opinions of men. If we would believe the Atheist, he will needs persuade us he is right. Listen to the Deist for a while, and you would swear he is right. One attempts to laugh us out of our God, and the other out of our Saviour. Next comes the tribe of strong believers, with imagination warm and judgment scant. They are happy enough to see little or no difficulty in the scheme which they have embraced (if by chance they have any scheme,) while the opinions of others they judge horribly wicked and absurd. These are all absolutely right in their own opinion, having no spot of error and delusion. The Arian and Socinian then advance upon us with their weighty reasons. They insist there is a God. They allow there is a Saviour. But, of the latter description, Dr. Priestley, Goliath like, comes forward, and challenges the armies of this Divine and Atoning Saviour, to shew that he is any more than a mere, weak, frail, peccable man like ourselves. I read, or think I read, a very different account of his person and nature in the pages of divine revelation; but the Doctor will persuade us these things are not so; that our eyes deceive us; and that we are all dangerously mistaken. Moreover, I have been accustomed to believe that I certainly have a soul within this earthly shrine called the body. The Doctor says, however, it is no such thing; we are nothing more than simple matter, without any higher and purer principle. Now, I say, under all these and many more perplexities of mind, which I have for upwards of twenty years experienced, *Bishop Butler's Analogy*, has given me more satisfaction than any single book which I have ever read. I am confident I have a *soul*, and a *divine* and *atoning* Redeemer, maugré all any man can advance to the contrary.

one hand, how God hath threatened judicial blindness to the disobedient, proud, conceited, and high-minded; and on the other, what gracious promises he hath made to the modest, humble, and obedient enquirer after truth.* — *It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:—The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in the darknefs.*†

Again:

‡ All the real principles of the gospel are perfectly consistent with the purest and most perfect reason of man. Some of them may indeed surpass our highest powers, but none of them are, or can be, contrary thereto. Is any thing more agreeable to sound reason than to believe the declarations of heaven, on subjects where we have no natural means of being informed? If then God hath made his will known unto us by Moses and the Prophets, by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, that will ought to be the *ABSOLUTE RULE* of our conduct—our belief, thoughts, words, and actions. This is perfectly consonant to the best human reason. If therefore we treat with slight and neglect that will; if we daringly erect any other scheme of things beside or in opposition; if we rashly presume to think and act contrary to the divine plan; and say in the spirit of Pharaoh, Who is the Lord, and what is his will that I should obey them? I know not the Lord, neither will I regard his authority. If this should be the conduct of any of his creatures, it is most evidently consistent with the purest reason, that he should treat such persons with due severity, harden their hearts, and suffer them to plunge themselves into all manner of error and delusion. This has been the conduct of the Almighty in all ages. And it appears to me infinitely reasonable it should be so. *Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.* Every man living should therefore be extremely cautious to submit his own will, his own understanding, and his own reason, as well as his passions, to the will, understanding, and reason of God.

† Deut. 28. 15, 28, 29.

Again:—*The meek will be guide in judgment: the meek will be teach his way.*

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his covenant.⁹

Again:—*Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.²*

Again:—*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

The froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.³

Again:—*None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.³*

Again:—*Who is wise, and he shall understand these things; prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.⁴*

Again:—*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.⁵*

Lastly:—*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.—Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.⁶*

From

⁹Pf. 25. 9. 14.—¹Ibid. 119. 98, 99, 100, 104.—²Prov. 3. 5. 6, 32.—³Dan. 12. 10.—⁴Hof. 14. 9.—⁵John 7. 17.—⁶James 1. 5. 17.

From these scriptural declarations it manifestly appears, that certain moral and religious qualifications are essentially necessary to the attainment of saving truth. The bible^a must be diligently read, and read with proper dispositions, before any man, however great, learned, and externally moral, can justly expect to be led into an acquaintance with the interior of religion. Much may be done in the theory of it without such a state of mind; but nothing to any saving purpose. A careless, desultory, or self-conceited perusal of the bible will not do. There must be a sober, serious sense of things; an earnest concern for salvation, and a resolute determination to walk in the path of piety and virtue. There must be, moreover, earnest prayer to God, that he will vouchsafe to illuminate the mind, and lead it into all truth. And this must be persevered in from the time of our setting out in the ways of piety and goodness to the end of our lives; otherwise the veil that was once removed will soon return upon the mind, and all the inward power, love, and freedom, which it once enjoyed will be lost. Nay, even the grateful relish and quick discernment of religious truths that it formerly possessed shall be succeeded by a kind of spiritual slumber, and
 loss

^aSome of our minute philosophers, and superficial dabbles in learning and religion, treat the bible with most inexcusable impriety. Sometimes they pretend that one thing is wrong, and then another. One while Moses is mistaken; then the Prophets are called to an account. Now Christ makes a slip; and now the Apostles. The two genealogies of Christ by St. Matthew and St.

loss of all taste for religion, and the things that make for our everlasting peace. This view of the matter being inexpressibly important, I will call to the Reader's attention two or three more passages of holy scripture, which seem to justify all that is here advanced. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

I i

Make

Luke are a grievous stumbling block to some; the difficulties attending the death of Judas, the traitor, and the different narrations of the resurrection of Christ to others. Indeed, in a book so ancient as the bible, and consisting of such a variety of matter, men of light, frothy, and captious minds, will always find abundant room for displaying their perverse and ill-judged wit. To such unhappy persons, however, I would seriously recommend the late Bishop Horne's Letters on Infidelity, and the present Bishop Watson's Address to the Sceptics and Infidels of the age, in his excellent Apology for Christianity, addressed to Mr. Gibbon. These two valuable publications, the former in substance, and the latter entire, may be met with in my Sacred Literature, vol. 1. p. 396—457.

I would, moreover, recommend to these Bible-cavillers a sober consideration of the following testimonies. They ought to make men declare themselves modestly at least:—

1. The noble Picus Mirandula was accounted the best linguist and scholar of his age, and yet, after he had run through innumerable volumes, he rested in the Bible as the only book wherein he had found out the true eloquence and wisdom.

2. Sir Matthew Hale, in a letter to one of his sons, told him, I have been somewhat acquainted with men and books: I have had long experience in learning, and in the world: there is no book like the Bible, for excellent learning, wisdom, and use; and it is want of understanding in them who think or say otherwise.

3. The famous John Selden, one of the most eminent philosophers, and most learned men of his time, who had read as much perhaps as ever man did, and collected books and manuscripts upon all ancient subjects, declared to archbishop Usher towards the latter end of his days, that he could rest his soul on no book, save the Scriptures.

4. The honourable Robert Boyle wrote a whole volume in praise of the style and language of holy Scripture, and calls the Bible, "That matchless book;" and declares, that it is impossible we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly.

*Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.**

Again:—*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*[†]

Again:—

5. Rousseau, notwithstanding his infidelity, declared to a friend—I will confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures!

6. Count Struensee, prime minister of Denmark, declared, when recovered from his infidelity—I own with joy, I find Christianity more amiable, the more I get acquainted with it.

7. Sir Isaac Newton entered further into the depths of philosophy than ever mortal did before or since, and yet he accounted the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. And, as a proof of his respect for them, when Dr. Halley his friend, but yet a professed infidel, was throwing out some indecent reflections upon Christianity, Sir Isaac stopt him short, and addressed him in these or the like words—Dr. Halley, I am always glad to hear you when you speak about astronomy, or other parts of the mathematics, because that is a subject you have studied, and well understand; but you should not talk of Christianity, for you have not studied it: I have; and am certain you know nothing of the matter.

8. To a young man desirous of information Mr. Lock gave this advice—Study the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

After *such* declarations as these from *such* men, what shall we think of those contemptible sceptics, who are continually disturbing every company into which they are admitted with their profane and low-witted sneers against Moses and the Prophets, Jesus Christ and his Apostles? Having renounced their baptismal engagements, like Julian, the Apostate; like him they will ere long be compelled to exclaim—*Vicisti, O Galilæe!*

[†]Is. 6. 9, 10.—[†]1 Cor. 2. 14.

Again:—If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.²

Again:—Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.³

And again:—Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.⁴

Now, let any man judge, after reading these several passages of the word of God, whether there be not some danger of miscarrying in the all-important business of salvation; and whether every person ought not, therefore, to be upon his guard, on the one hand, against an immoral conduct, and on the other, against vile seducers and destructive principles: for wrong principles of religion are generally productive of a loose and irreligious conduct; or a vain, conceited, and haughty state of mind, utterly inconsistent with every just expectation of favour and salvation with God.⁵

I i 2

SECTION

²2 Cor. 4. 3. 4.—³2 Cor. 11. 13—15.—⁴Mat. 7. 13, 14.

⁵—“ My long-sufferance and my day of grace

“ They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;

SECTION XIV.

IF, however, after all his prayers and endeavours in searching the word of God, the enquirer after truth still continues doubtful concerning any of the capital doctrines of the gospel; if he is haunted with fearful apprehensions lest he should not understand the scriptures aright, let him have recourse to the immediate followers of our Saviour and his Apostles. Let him consult their writings, see how they *unanimously* understood the word of God upon the subjects in question, and abide by their determination. This is the rule laid down by many of the Ancients; and not a few of our best modern writers have given their sanction to it. Bildad in the book of Job says to his afflicted friend, *Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers; for we are but of yesterday and know nothing.*

So Moses advised the Israelites, as a remedy against their future infidelity, that they would look back into the history of their ancestors, and see what wonderful things God had done for them:

De

“ But hard be harden’d, blind be blinded more,
 “ That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
 “ And none but such from mercy I exclude.”

Paradise Lost, b. 3. l. 198—202.

Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee. And in like manner the prophet Jeremiah: Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

The Fathers of the Christian church have also recommended a similar method of proceeding in the investigation of religious truth: "That is more true which is first," saith Tertullian, "and that is first which is from the beginning."⁶ Again:—"I say that that is true whatsoever it is that was first; that is spurious whatsoever came in afterwards."⁷ And again, with respect to the order of bishops:—"Let them therefore exhibit the origin of their churches, let them display the order of their bishops, descending from the beginning through their successors, that the first bishop may have some author and predecessor, either from the Apostles or apostolic men, who also have persevered in communion with the Apostles."⁸ Irenæus likewise appeals to catholic tradition:—

I i 3

ditation:—

⁶ *Contra Marcionem*, lib. 4. cap. 5.

⁷ *Adversus Praxeam*, cap. 2.

⁸ *De Præscript.* c. 32.

dition:—"In every church," saith this learned and pious Father, "it is in the power of every one who wishes to see the truth, to inspect the tradition of the Apostles which is displayed throughout the whole world. And we can specify the names of those persons who were instituted bishops by the Apostles in the churches, and also their successors even to our own times, all who taught no such thing, neither knew they the doctrines which are raved upon by these (heretics)."

St. Augustine has the same sentiment:—"That which the universal church holds, and which has not been instituted by councils, but always retained, is rightly believed to have come in by no other means but by apostolic authority."

But the excellent Vincentius, in the fifth century, hath treated upon this question at large. And the rule which he hath laid down, and indeed which they laid down before him, is an admirable one, and ought never to be lost sight of in all our researches into the original doctrines of divine revelation.—"I have been at great pains," says that valuable writer, "and often made it my particular business to consult very many persons of the highest rank for piety and learning, about a certain

⁹Adv. hæ. lib. 3. cap. 3.

¹De bap. contra Don. lib. 4. cap. 24.

“ certain general rule to distinguish the true catho-
“ lic faith from the depravations of heresy. And
“ after repeated enquiries, the sum of all their an-
“ swers amounted to this, That if I, or any other
“ Christian, would discover the artifice of growing
“ heretics, and keep out of their snares, and con-
“ tinue perfectly sound in the right faith, the way,
“ by God’s grace, is to secure it upon these two
“ foundations: First, Upon the authority of ho-
“ ly scripture; and after that, Secondly, Upon
“ the tradition of the catholic church.” And then
he continues:—

“ But here, perhaps, a man may ask this questi-
“ on; Since the canon of scripture is compleat,
“ and more than sufficient in every respect, what
“ need is there for adding the sense of the catholic
“ church to such a perfect rule? To which
“ question I answer, that there is good reason for
“ such addition; because the sacred writings, hav-
“ ing a sublime sense, all understandings cannot
“ reach it alike; but one expounds the divine oracles
“ after this manner, and another after that; inso-
“ much, that there are as many opinions about the
“ true meaning, as there are expositors. For in-
“ stance, Novatianus interprets one way, Pho-
“ tinus another, Sabellius another, Donatus ano-
“ ther, Arius another, Eunomius, Macedonius,
“ Apollinaris, Priscillianus, Jovianus, Pelagius,
“ Celestius, each another; and, in fine, Nestori-

“ us another. And therefore, under so great difficulties, in such a perplexity of various error, I hold it extremely necessary to apply the sense of the catholic church to the scriptures, as a rule to a line, and as a clue to conduct us in this labyrinth of opinions.”

“ And

²It is just the same in the present day. The Arians and Socinians, the Sabellians and Trinitarians, the Calvinists and Arminians, &c. &c. all differ very materially from one another in their religious opinions; and yet all profess to be right. Every party too has men of considerable abilities to espouse its cause. What course then must serious men take under these contradictory views of things? I humbly conceive, the plan pointed out in these Strictures is not only the most judicious, but the only one that can be adopted with any hopes of satisfaction. The Bible is the rule, and the only rule of religious truth. Apply the Fathers to that rule, and abide the consequence. If after this we still retain different opinions, there is no remedy. We must agree to disagree; defend our sentiments in the best manner we can; and leave the cause to God. In the mean time, we ought to consider one another as fellow creatures, and treat each other with kindness, forbearance, and charity; doing good in every way that circumstances will admit.

“ In this our transient day of pain and grief,

“ Sprung from the same *GREAT SIRE*, so let us live

“ As owning the fraternal tie divine,

“ And lighten mutually each other's load.”

All this seems to me perfectly consistent with fidelity to what we conceive to be the truth. Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey, it is confessed, I have here used with great freedom. I have thought it my duty so to do. They have treated others with equal freedom. They have thought it their duty so to do. I am so far, however, from entertaining any malevolence to these worthy Gentlemen, that I respect them highly, and should be very glad to see them, to converse with them, and to render them any service in my power. The men I love. Their religious opinions I detest. In our morality we are agreed. In our divinity we differ. I pray God the virtue of that atoning blood, without which there can be no forgiveness, and which they with scorn reject, may be applied to our mutual salvation. If its efficacy extends to helpless infants and virtuous Heathens, may it not be extended also to all serious and conscientious men under well meaning error and delusion? How this may be I cannot tell. God only knows how far his uncovenanted mercy

“ And for us who are in the bosom of the catholic church, it ought to be our first and principal care to chuse such doctrines, as we find to have been believed *in all places, at all times, and by all the faithful*. For there is nothing truly and properly catholic, but what truly and fully comprehends all these. And we are thus catholic when we follow *universality, antiquity, and, unanimous consent*. But we follow *universality*, when we profess that only to be the true faith, which is professed by the church all the world over. In like manner we are followers of *antiquity*, when we religiously adhere to that sense of scripture, which manifestly obtained amongst the holy fathers, our predecessors. And lastly, we follow *consent*, when we embrace the definitions and opinions of almost all, if not all, the bishops and teachers in the ancient church.”

The

may extend. If I do err, let me, however, err on the amiable side. Bigots of any denomination I approve not. A candid and sincere Deist, if such an one there exists, who professes to love and seek truth, is, in my estimation, a far more desirable character, than a sour, morose, and angry bigot, even of my own sentiments, who believes through thick and thin, and can tell you neither the why nor the wherefore of his creed.

“ Let not this weak, unknowing hand,
 “ Presume thy bolts to throw,
 “ And deal damnation round the land
 “ On each I judge thy foe.
 “ If I am right, thy grace impart
 “ Still in the right to stay;
 “ If I am wrong, O teach my heart
 “ To find that better way.

‘Commonitory concerning the Rule of Faith.

The method of proceeding in our investigation of religious truth, so strongly recommended by this pious Father, is what has been pursued by all the most deep and successful theological writers of every denomination. It is the very best human wit ever invented, and appears to me capable of ascertaining the great leading doctrines of the gospel with a degree of precision little short of demonstration. Our excellent Reformers, Cranmer and Ridley, were very sensible of this, and therefore kept close to the decisions of these great and learned men. Erasmus performed a service extremely useful to the church of Christ, and gained immortal honour, by his unwearied labour in the writings of these holy Fathers. Since his time, by the concurrence of a variety of circumstances, the works of many of them have fallen into considerable disrepute. This is the case more especially among the various Sectarists of the present and last age. For as their peculiarities in doctrine, or discipline, or both, will not stand the test of these early writers, it has been the endeavour of several of their authors to represent the Fathers in a disadvantageous point of view, that so their testimony, on subjects unfavourable to the dissenting cause, might be rendered of no weight. It was the same with some of the Roman Catholics at the Reformation. When they found that

“ Teach me to feel another’s woe,
“ To hide the fault I see;
“ That mercy I to others shew,
“ That mercy shew me.”

that the Protestants turned the writings of the Fathers against them, they set themselves to discredit the validity of their testimony.² Thus both one and the other, for the sake of promoting that particular party in which they were embarked, would have destroyed the credit of those great luminaries in the church, to whom every party is under such vast obligations, even for the preservation of the word of God itself. Far otherwise, however, it is with the best of our own theological writers. They put the holy scriptures in their proper place, but yet in such a manner as to pay all due respect to the successors of our Saviour and his Apostles.

And this it is which has given them that great and decided superiority over all other authors on most polemical subjects. I need only instance in the writings of the two celebrated Bishops of St. David's, doctors Bull and Horsley. It is hardly possible to conceive victories more compleat than those they have obtained over their opposers on the subject of ecclesiastical antiquity. Dr. Priestley,³ in particular, whatever fame he may have acquired in philosophical experiments, is a mere child on this question, when compared with these two Divines.

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²This was particularly the case with Petavius and Huetius. See Horsley's Tracts, p. 59.

³This learned gentleman professes to be a sincere lover of truth, and yet he is continually attacking the weakest and most indefensible of the positions of his opponents, passing over those which are more conclusive. This is neither candid nor consistent with the

There are many other of our Theologians who have appeared in the same cause with great and deserved credit. Bishops Jewel, Pearson, Beveridge, Stillingfleet, and Fell; Doctors Waterland, Hicks, Allix, and Grabe; Messrs. Leslie, Reeves, Bingham, Nelson, and others, were profoundly skilled in Christian antiquity, and applied their knowledge to very valuable purposes. It is to be lamented, that pursuits of this kind should be so uncommon among Christians. The Clergy of the church of England, especially, might labour in this province with great advantage to the public.* And every one who has got a tongue to speak, and an hand to write, should contribute his best endeavours towards calling their attention, and the attention

character of a sincere lover of truth. I have often been struck with this conduct of the Doctor in perusing his various compositions, and could produce several instances. See Jesse's Defence of the Church, p. 82. where this charge against him is considered more in detail.

*There is a fine exhortation to the study of the ancient Christian Fathers in the conclusion of the learned and excellent Dr. Cave's Prolegomena to his *Historia Literaria*, a part of which I will transcribe in this note from the translation of Dr. Priestley in his *Defences of Unitarianism* for the years 1788 and 1789. Having shewn the importance of these studies with respect to the Catholics, he adds—"Nor are new arguments wanting to the prosecution of these studies, especially from the unhappy itch of heterodoxy in persons of our own age, that has revived so many ancient heresies, which had been constantly condemned by the church. The disciples of Arius, or rather of Photinus, are extending themselves every where. Seeing their cause condemned by the tribunal of the primitive church, they attack antiquity itself, and trample upon the venerable witnesses of the primitive faith.

"The Nicene creed is a constant beam in the eyes of these men, and they treat Athanasius, Hilary, and the other champi-

tion of all the professors of the gospel, from modern novelties to the venerable works of these great and holy men. No writings in the world are so worthy of our study as theirs. For, with all their blemishes and defects, they come the nearest in excellence and importance to the bible, that grand charter of all our future hopes and expectations. These are no private and peculiar opinions; they are the sentiments of men the most serious and competent to judge. I have produced several valuable testimonies of this kind in another work,^s to which the Reader might be referred; but as this publication

“ons of it, worse than dogs or serpents. They, however, boast of
 “their antiquity, but it is the offspring of the old serpent. They
 “have their Fathers; but whom? Ebion, Cerinthus, Symmachus,
 “Theodotion, Paulus Samosatensis, Photinus, and others. These
 “they boast of as their predecessors, and the fathers of their faith.
 “As to the catholic writers, they either reject them, elude the
 “force of their arguments by sophistry, or, what is more extraordi-
 “nary, endeavour to draw them over to their own party.

“Our studious youth, therefore, must be exhorted to be on
 “the watch, and must apply with all their might to the works of
 “the Ancients; that, protected by these arms, they may repel
 “the attacks of their adversaries, answer their sophistry, and suc-
 “cessfully defend the cause of the catholic, and consequently that
 “of the English, church. *Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for*
 “*the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.* Jer.
 “6. 16. These writings will shew us the lurking holes of the
 “serpent. These will bring us to the very fountain of truth.

“I shall conclude with an excellent passage from Tertullian:
 “If these things be so, it is plain whatever opinion agrees with
 “the apostolic churches, where our faith originated, it is to be
 “considered as true; since they, no doubt, hold what the church
 “received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and
 “Christ from God. And every doctrine is to be considered as
 “false, which is contrary to that truth, which was taught by
 “the Church, by the Apostles, by Christ, and by God. You

^sSacred Literature, vol. 4. appen: p. 4—12.

publication may possibly fall into the hands of some persons, who will never have an opportunity of seeing the other, I will be at the pains to transcribe them here, translating such as are in Latin for the use of the mere English reader, and adding a few more testimonies to the same purpose, which have since occurred to me in the course of my reading.

I. BUDDÆUS.

“ therefore who wish to exercise your curiosity in things relating
 “ to your salvation, visit the apostolical churches where the chairs
 “ of the Apostles still are, and where their authentic letters are
 “ read, so that you seem to see and hear them in person. De
 “ Præscrip. cap. 21. 36 Upon the whole, if that be true which
 “ was the most ancient, and that be the most ancient which was
 “ from the beginning, and that was from the beginning, which
 “ was from the Apostles, it will be equally evident, that that was
 “ from the Apostles, which is held sacred in the apostolic churches.
 “ Adv. Marc. l. 4. c. 5.

“ Furnished with these arms, let us defend our own principles,
 “ and answer those who ask a reason of our faith, which we profess to
 “ be that which is truly primitive, catholic, and apostolic. Such
 “ are our principles, that we have no reason to decline the discus-
 “ sion of them before the tribunal of the purest antiquity. Let us
 “ then abandon all useless pursuits, knotty trifles, violent conten-
 “ tions, ridiculous and absurd disputations, and let us pass our own
 “ time, not in places of public business, or diversion, running
 “ about like buffoons, attending the levees of the great, and
 “ courting their favour, but in pulpits, in cathedral chairs, and
 “ in the recesses of our libraries, diligently applying to those stu-
 “ dies, which have for their object the good of the church, the
 “ salvation of souls, the knowledge of antiquity, and all useful
 “ literature.

“ Do you especially apply to these sacred studies with all your
 “ might, who are blessed with ability and leisure, who are high
 “ in rank, and in the possession of those emoluments, which the
 “ piety of our ancestors has consecrated as the rewards of useful
 “ learning, and excitements to greater diligence. Let us distin-
 “ guish ourselves by piety and sacred literature. Let the venera-
 “ ble Fathers of the catholic church be in everlasting remem-
 “ brance with us, and let their writings be held in the highest
 “ honour and esteem. If my writings shall contribute in the least
 “ to our better acquaintance with them, I shall think that I have
 “ not laboured in vain.”

I. B U D D Æ U S.

THE Fathers were men, therefore fallible, and not to be acquitted of all mistakes, unless we could acquit them too of human frailties. But though we should not dissemble the real errors of the Fathers; yet it becomes us to be cautious in our censures, nor to lay more errors to their charge, than they were really guilty of; nor to be over-zealous in searching out every occasion of carping at their writings; nor to aggravate, beyond reason, those errors which they may be found to have fallen into; lest we thereby give an handle to the enemies of religion to turn it to a bad use, by decrying the authority of antiquity in general, and in relation to the weightier matters of our faith. Buddæus confesses this. And though he was no very zealous advocate for the Fathers, he speaks of them in very handsome terms, not running the lengths of those, who talk only as their prejudices direct them, without knowing any thing of the matter. Buddæus was a man of learning, and knew what he said; and therefore at the same time that he cannot acquit the Fathers of all errors and faults (and who ever pretended to do it?) declares them to have been excellent men, judicious, pious, virtuous, and learned for the times they lived in. He takes the
“ middle

middle way, neither ascribing too much, nor too little to their authority. He is so far from despising them, as they only do who are ignorant of them, that he recommends the diligent study of them, not only as useful, but as absolutely necessary in order to an exact knowledge in ecclesiastical antiquity: and declares, that, notwithstanding the errors of this or of that single Father in some points; yet the true catholic doctrine and faith of the church may be found in them⁶

II. J E R O M Z A N C H I U S.

THIS I ingenuously confess, such is the state of my mind, that I cannot easily depart, either from the determinations of the antient Fathers, or their interpretations of scripture, unless convinced and compelled, either by plain testimonies of sacred scripture, or necessary consequences, and clear demonstrations. For my conscience is so far satisfied, that I desire even to die in this settled conviction of mind.—

I freely profess to the whole church of Christ, that my conscience will not let me dissent from the opinions of the Fathers, especially when most or all of them agree in one thing.”⁷

III. MONSIEUR

⁶Rev. Joseph Clarke's Preface to Dr. Waterland's Sermons, p. 20.

⁷Epistle before his Confession of Faith.

III. MONSIEUR DAILLE.

THERE is no question to be made, but that the Christian religion was more pure, and without mixture, in its beginnings and infancy, than it was afterwards in its youth and progress, it being the ordinary course of things, to contract corruptions more or less, according as they are more or less removed from their first institution. Now I cannot believe, that any faithful Christian will deny, but that Christianity was in its height and perfection in the time of the blessed Apostles. And indeed it would be the greatest injury that could be offered them, to say, that any of their successors have either had a greater desire, or more abilities to advance Christianity than they had. It will hence follow then, that those times which were nearest to the Apostles were necessarily the purest, and least subject to suspicion of corruptions, either in doctrine, or in manners, and Christian discipline; it being but reasonable to believe, that if there be any corruptions crept into the church, they came in by little and little, and by degrees; as it happens in all other things.*—

The Fathers abound in strong and solid proofs of the fundamental principles of Christianity, and they teach many excellent things, which contribute to the clear understanding of the scriptures, in which these mysteries are contained. In this re-

K k

spect,

*Treatise on the Right Use of the Fathers, p. 2. Eng. Transf.

spect, their authority is of great use, and may serve as a probable argument of the truth.⁹

IV. GROTIUS.

THE works of the apostolical Fathers were, next to the scriptures, Grotius' favourite study.¹

V. BISHOP BULL.

THE reading of the Fathers, next to the holy scriptures, should be the foundation of all theology.² —

This is the best, yea, the only way of ending our most unhappy controversies, which have rent the church of Christ into so many parts, if, next to the scriptures, we would receive and reverence the most pure and primitive antiquity, and persuade others to the same practice, and religiously follow the agreeing judgment of the ancient doctors approved by the catholic church, and especially of them who were nearest to the apostolic age, wheresoever this can be found, which is to be found in all those points that are of any great moment.³

VI. KING CHARLES I.

IF the practice of the primitive church, and the universal consent of the Fathers be not a convincing argument, when the interpretation of scripture is doubtful,

⁹Ibid. part 2, p. 184.—This is the testimony of an enemy to the Fathers, extorted by the mere force of truth.

¹M. De Burigny's Life, p. 297.—²Defensio Fidei Nicænæ, p. 7.

³Nelson's Life of Bp. Bull.

doubtful, I know nothing.—Although I never esteemed any argument equal to the scriptures, yet I do think the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and the universal practice of the primitive church, to be the best and most authentic interpreters of God's word.*

VII. REV. DR. GRABE.

THIS learned man, after taking his master of arts degree, devoted himself to the study of divinity, and read the works of the Fathers with the utmost attention. These he took first into his hand as the best masters and instructors upon the important subject of religion. He was fond of their principles and customs, and that fondness grew into a kind of unreserved veneration for their authority.†

VIII. REV. WILLIAM CAVE, D. D.

WE have in the Fathers of the church the most admirable examples of a divine and religious life, of a real and unfeigned piety, a sincere and universal charity, a strict temperance and sobriety, an unconquerable patience and submission clearly represented to us. And the higher we go, the more illustrious are the instances of piety and virtue. For however later ages may have improved in knowledge, experience daily making new additions to arts and sciences, yet

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former

*Hickes' Sermons, p. 82.—†New and General Biographical Dictionary.

former times were most eminent for the practice and virtues of a holy life. The divine laws while newly published had a stronger influence upon the minds of men, and the spirit of religion was more active and vigorous, till men by degrees began to be debauched into that impiety and profaneness, that in these last times have over-run the world.⁶

IX. REV. CHARLES LESLIE.

NOTHING can contribute more towards promoting the service of Christ in this degenerate age, than to acquaint men with the histories of the church, and the works of the Fathers in the primitive times.⁷

X. REV. DR. GEORGE HICKES.

ALL students in divinity should be convinced, how necessary it is to read the ancient Fathers, in order downwards from the apostolical age.⁸

XI. REV. DR. WATERLAND.

THE works of the Fathers will be held in great esteem and veneration, while every weak attempt to blast their credit, will meet with what it justly deserves; I was going to say what, but it may sound severe.⁹

XII. REV.

⁶Apostolici, in the address to the Reader.—⁷Letter to Mr. Parker.—⁸Letter to Mr. Nelson.

⁹Defence of some Queries, p. 421. See an able defence of the Fathers against the cavils of their adversaries in Waterland's Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 412—436.

XII. REV. WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH,
M. A.

THE question whether such or such a book be canonical scripture, though it may be decided negatively out of scripture, by shewing apparent and irreconcilable contradictions between it and some other book confessedly canonical: but affirmatively it cannot, but only by the testimonies of the ancient churches; any book being to be received as undoubtedly canonical, or to be doubted of as uncertain, or rejected as apocryphal, according as it was received, or doubted of, or rejected by them.¹

Again:—Thus much I can say, that whatsoever hath been held necessary to salvation, either by the catholic church of all ages, or by the consent of Fathers, measured by Vincentius Lyrinensis' rule—I do verily believe and embrace.²

XIII. ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

I am sure the ancient Fathers and Christians defined Christian religion better, and gave a more reasonable and satisfactory account of it, than any of those do, who are so apt to slight them.³

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XIV. ARCHBISHOP

See also the use of an appeal to the writings of the Fathers in the Trinitarian controversy, in the above Defence of some Queries, P. 453—455.

¹Works.—²Ibid. pref. p. 13.—³Sermon 228, p. 264.

XIV. ARCHBISHOP WAKE.

WE ought to look upon the writings of the apostolical Fathers, though not of equal authority with those which we call in a singular manner the holy scriptures, yet worthy of a much greater respect than any composures that have been made since; however men may seem to have afterwards written with more art, and to have shewn a much greater stock of human learning, than what is to be found, not only in their writings, but even in the sacred books of the New Testament itself.*

XV. REV. WILLIAM REEVES, M. A.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ingrate and dishonest practices of some late unchristian critics, the the Fathers must be allowed not to have been behind hand in the common advantages of men; for their writings speak them to be as great by nature and education, of as much point and solidity, penetration and brightness, and every human way as well adjusted for defenders of the faith, as any reasoners of the hugest size in these declining ages of the world.—

Whoever sets out in the study of the Christian mystery without the conduct of the Fathers, seems to me to be sailing into the ocean without his compass, in danger of being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.†

hind

‡Introduction to the Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers.

§Preface to Primitive Apologies.

XVI. REV. NATHANIEL MARSHAL,
L. L. B.

WHEN the sense of scripture is disputed, upon any article of moment, it cannot but be of consequence to know what the churches thought of it, which had the presence and conversation of the Apostles to set them right in any mistaken construction of their doctrine, whether delivered to them by word or writing. Their unanimity in such articles, during the three first ages, and their care to prevent innovations, or to bear testimony against them, when they could not be prevented, are considerable arguments in favour of the truths, which were so preserved by them. And the writers, who lived within that period, are very full and competent witnesses to us of their sentiments; and their integrity in reporting them, is instead of a thousand other excellencies.*

XVII. REV. DR. B I S H O P.

IT is certain that the judgment and determination of the first ages concerning any article of faith, or the meaning of scripture, will be of great weight with all serious and unprejudiced persons. Though the scriptures are the only rule of faith, yet may they be mistaken, or perverted; and therefore in dubious and disputed points, we are apt to enquire how the earliest authors understood and explained

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them;

*Preface to Cyprian's Works,

them: what opinions they held and professed as the true and necessary doctrines of Christianity, and what they denied or condemned, as erroneous, dangerous, and heretical. Though we are not to pay such a deference to them, as to believe any thing upon their authority, without, or against scripture; yet, in stating the sense of scripture, it must be a great satisfaction to our own minds, and a strong confirmation of our judgment, when we perceive that they concur with us in their notions, and interpret the holy scriptures after the same manner, and draw the same inferences from them; and it will highly recommend our doctrine to the world, when we can produce the sanction of antiquity in behalf of it. On the other hand, as it must lead a man, who has any measure of modesty and humility, to suspect his own understanding, and to guard against an assuming and peremptory behaviour; when he contradicts the common and long received opinions, and opposes his peculiar tenets to the declaration of the Ancients upon the same subject; so he must be apprehensive, that it will infallibly expose him to the public disesteem and censure.⁷

XVIII. BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

ALMIGHTY God looking continually down upon his church militant here below hath preserv-
ed

⁷Sermons at Lady Moyer's Lecture, p. 132.

ed to us even the most ancient commentaries safe and perfect; so that we never can sufficiently admire his wonderful providence in this affair: first, indeed, that so many books should be written by Christians in times so unfriendly and turbulent; and then, after such a variety of complex revolutions, that they should come down to our own times. For, not to go far from the Apostles, how many, and what extraordinary volumes are even now extant, which were written in the three first ages after them? Eusebius of Cæsarea, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Optatus of Milevum, Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen and Nyssen, Epiphanius, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Theophilus of Alexandria, Ruffinus, Gaudentius, Aurelius Prudentius, Augustine of Hippo, Marius Mercator, Chrysostom, Severus Sulpitius: We have likewise the truly excellent works of Lactantius, Arnobius, Dionysius Alexandrinus, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and St. Cyprian, who flourished in the second age after the Apostles, and of consequence before the Nicene council. We have volumes sufficiently large from Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian, written in the same century. Minutius Felix was also of the same period. We have moreover the ecclesiastical monuments of Irenæus, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, and Justin Martyr,
drawn

drawn up in the age next after the Apostles, besides the fragments of many others inserted in the church history of Eusebius. We have, finally, the truly venerable little works of St. Polycarp, Ignatius, and Clemens Romanus (and possibly of Hermas also) who all were conversant with the very Apostles of our Lord. So that we have a certain admirable continuation and series of ecclesiastical affairs from the very apostolic age to the fourth century, and so downwards even to our own times, drawn up by men the most learned in each age; from whence we at this day may draw the perpetual and unanimous consent of the universal church, as well in doctrine as in discipline.*

XIX. WILLIAM WHISTON.

My advice for the study of Divinity is, that, instead of all those bare, and later, and partial composures, whether they be councils, or Fathers, or schoolmen, or systems, or controversies; we make it our whole business, with the greatest care, integrity, and impartiality, to study the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament, with the best books necessary for the thorough understanding of the same: And, as a supplement and security to the right understanding of them, with the next degree of care, and with equal impartiality, to study the apostolical Fathers, and then those of the second century at the least,
Nay,

*Codex Canonum,

Nay, if possible, those of the third, and beginning of the fourth century also, till the time of Constantine the Great, and the council of Nice: concluding, as it were, this scheme of primitive writers with the works of the great Eusebius, to whom we owe almost all our authentic knowledge of the history of this first and purest state of the Christian church.

That this is the safest and surest, and most satisfactory method of study in divinity, all considering men must needs grant; because it is taking nothing upon trust, or at the second hand, but going immediately to the fountain head, to the truly genuine and original books of our religion.

As to myself, I must needs confess, that so little as the bare perusal of the Epistles and Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, and of the Epistle and Martyrdom of St. Polycarp; who must both of them know whether the facts on which our religion depends were really true or not; do more effectually convince me of the certain truth of Christianity, than whole books of the moderns on that subject, though written with great force and advantage.

As to the writings of the apostolical Fathers, I find such an honest simplicity, zeal, and seriousness in their exhortations, reproofs, directions, and examples, for the promoting of true and
genuine

genuine piety, that none of the modern books of religion and devotion themselves—do by any means so deeply affect and persuade me.*

XX. THE REV. ANTONY BLACKWALL,
M. A.

I would fain beg room among the Classics for three primitive writers of the church, St. Chrysostom, Minutius Felix, and Lactantius. St. Chrysostom is easy and pleasant to new beginners; and has written with a purity and eloquence which have been the admiration of all ages. This wonderful man in a great measure possesses all the excellencies of the most valuable Greek and Roman classics. He has the invention, copiousness, and perspicuity of Cicero; and all the elegance and accuracy of composition which is admired in Isocrates; with much greater variety and freedom. According as his subject requires, he has the easiness and sweetness of Xenophon, and the pathetic force and rapid simplicity of Demosthenes. His judgment is exquisite, his images noble, his morality sensible and beautiful. No man understands human nature to greater perfection, nor has a happier power of persuasion. He is always clear and intelligible upon the loftiest and greatest subject; and sublime and noble upon the least.

The

* Advice for the Study of Divinity, passim.

The Dialogue of Minutius is judicious and elegant, close and perspicuous. The Critics have indeed charged him with want of the Roman purity in some places; but if he has in a few passages a little spice of the African dialect, it is the least imaginable. He is full of lively and instructive sentences, which almost equal the number of the periods; which sentences naturally result from his subject, and are neatly interwoven with the thread and texture of his discourse. He argues with convincing reason, and rallies with agreeable satire and sharpness. His wit is true sterling, solid and bright, of intrinsic value, and unallayed lustre. He clears Christianity from the vile aspersions which the Pagan disputant threw upon it, and retorts his charge upon his adversary's religion with such becoming vehemence, and evidence of truth, that he demonstrates himself to be the most dangerous opponent that could be feared against a bad cause, as well as the noblest advocate, and ablest champion, that could be desired for a good one.

Lactantius has so much of the strength and beauty of the great Roman philosopher and orator, that he has gained the honourable character of the Christian Cicero. No man wrote with equal purity after the decay of the Latin tongue; scarce any man so like Cicero in its state of perfection. Both the Christian Apologists understand all the rites and ceremonies of the Grecian and Roman religion;

religion; and are perfectly acquainted with all their authors. They happily employ the arguments of the Pagan philosophers, the accounts of their historians, and the eloquence of their poets and orators, to defend and adorn the Christian cause. They turn the artillery of their Heathen enemies against them; prove their pretended gods to be mere mortals, by the concessions of their most zealous worshippers; and triumph over Roman superstition by the force of Roman eloquence.

XXI. DR. J O R T I N.

IT would be a false inference to conclude from the blemishes and mistakes of the Fathers, that they are to be cast aside as altogether useless.

Considered as classic authors, they are as valuable as their Pagan contemporaries, and contain instruction of the grammatical, critical, and philosophical kind.

They are unexceptionable witnesses from age to age of the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament; they shew us evidently that they had the same scriptures which we now have.

They serve to settle the true readings of the New Testament, and are of the more importance, as we have hardly any manuscripts older than the fifth century, and but few of those.

The Fathers, particularly the Greek Fathers, are in some places useful interpreters of the scriptures.

If

¹Introduction to the Classics, p. 138—142.

If we take them in the character of historians, though they are not professedly such, they are witnesses and recorders of the customs and opinions of Christians, Jews, and Pagans, and represent to us the state of the church and empire.²

XXII. REV. DR. C R O F T.

EXCEPT a critical acquaintance with the original language of the Old Testament, and even this exception is not applicable to all, the ancient Fathers had most of the learning of which the world was in possession.³

XXIII. BISHOP HORSLEY.

THE reasonableness of our faith will be best understood from the writings of the Fathers of the three first centuries. And amongst these the Platonists of the second age deserve particular attention, for the great perspicuity with which in general they expound the faith, and the great ability with which they defend it.⁴

XXIV. THE REV. HENRY KETT, M. A.

IN the works of the Fathers may be found specimens of elegant composition to gratify the taste; interesting facts to enlarge the circle of knowledge; and examples of piety to amend the heart.

The reader of the Fathers is convinced that although the prize of literature is borne away by the
classical

²Charge Second, p. 397.—³Sermons, p. 69.—⁴Tracts, p. 68.

classical authors of Greece and Rome ; yet similar beauties distinguish the compositions which are the objects of his pursuit. Neither the graces of simplicity, nor the splendour of ornament were confined to Xenophon and Plato, nor to Livy and Cicero ; for every impartial critic will commend the pure stile of Lactantius ; the rich imagery, and apposite illustrations of Theodoret ; the classical fluency of Minutius Felix ; the uniform perspicuity of Basil ; the glowing effusions of Gregory of Nazianzum ; and the exuberant and attracting eloquence of Chrysostom, and Cyprian.

From the Fathers we may learn with what unremitting care the holy scriptures were preserved during successive ages. The quotations which abound in their works furnish strong and convincing proofs of the authenticity of the present copies. By them we are informed that these scriptures were zealously appealed to and consulted by writers who were unanimous upon no other subject. Their authenticity was held to be indisputable. They were repeatedly made the arbiters of controversy, and the guides of faith and practice. Hence also we estimate the veneration in which they were held and the vigilance with which they were guarded. Hence we derive the most perfect assurance and strongest evidence that they have escaped unmulitated, and uncorrupted from the tumult of controversy, the artifice of fraud, the hostility of Paganism, and the ravages of time.

From

From the great store of literature which the church has accumulated from age to age, there are certain productions which deserve to be selected with peculiar care. The works of those whose names have been recited, are valuable for elegance of style, faithfulness of narrative, fervour of piety, or copiousness of examples. But allowing the strength of these recommendations, we hesitate not to conclude, that the first attention of an ecclesiastical student is most properly directed to Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Athenagoras.

If it be considered that their writings immediately succeeded the publication of the New Testament; that they are repositories of sacred history which in the order of time claim the nearest place to the gospel; that they are the monuments of the sincerity of the early converts, and the evidences of the authenticity of the New Testament, they become very interesting subjects of speculation. We shall raise these works to a much greater height of esteem if we consider the situations and the attainments of their respective authors. The ages in which they flourished were singularly propitious to the acquirement of evangelical knowledge, as they drew Christianity from its source. Some of them were exalted to the highest rank in the church, and others were distinguished by comprehensive learning. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp and Irenæus were Bishops of the most popu-

pulous and celebrated cities of the Roman empire, and Justin and Athenagoras were instructed in the wisdom of the ancient Philosophers. The lives of all were consecrated to the faith; and such was their unconquerable adherence to the Christian cause, that Ignatius, Polycarp and Justin sealed its truth with their blood.

The field of information which their works open to our view is wide and interesting. Here are to be found the prevailing sentiments of the first Christians, the testimony borne to the inspired volume, and the interpretation first made of its contents. Here are described the first heresies, and what measures were adopted to confute them; the discipline established in the infant church, the form of its government, and the various and cruel machinations of its enemies. Moreover, in them may be seen the earnestness of the primitive believers for the glory of God, and their solicitude for the salvation of man; what was their support during the vicissitudes of life; and what the ground of their hopes, amidst the sufferings of martyrdom.⁵ —

IF THE writings of the Fathers⁶ are so excellent and important, let the well-disposed Christian who wishes

⁵Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, *passim*.

⁶Various other testimonies in favour of the Fathers, and the utility they are of in determining the true sense of scripture, may be met with in the notes of Dr. Waterland's unanswerable book on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. G. Vossius, Casaubon, Calvin, Melancthon, Patrick, Dodwell, Sherlock, and others, are there mentioned as being of the same opinion with the above learned men.

wishes to understand the grounds of his profession, and go to the bottom of things, lay aside the perusal of modern publications, upon divine subjects, as much as may be, and go back to first principles. The present mode of studying religion is directly the reverse of what it ought to be. The great bulk of common Christians spend all their time in a desultory kind of reading any thing or every thing that comes to hand, right or wrong, without any settled plan whatever. Now they will peruse a chapter in the bible, now a sermon written by some favourite author. At one time they will take up a controversial pamphlet, at another they will spend an hour in a book of entertainment. This is the general mode of proceeding, and the sure way to keep us always children. So doing, we shall be *tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; always learning, and never being able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* They never seem to reflect, that there is any danger of being deceived and misled. They quite forget, that *the devil is going about as a roaring lion seeking whom*

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The celebrated Selden also says, when speaking of the bible, "the text serves only to guess by, we must satisfy ourselves fully out of the authors that lived about those times."

Table Talk, p. 8.

See Monthly Review for June 1783, p. 515, for their testimony in favour of the Fathers, and also for the opinion of the learned Schultens. See moreover the Sequel of William Burgh, Esq; p. 10, 11, for his sentiments on the same great men. Bishop Hurd has likewise given a very favourable account of them in his Sermons at Lincoln's Inn, vol. 1. p. 10.

be may devour. They seldom consider, that we are all accountable to God for the cultivation of our mental powers, and for the conduct of our understandings, as well as for the morality of our exterior conduct; and that there are damnable principles, as well as destructive practices.⁷ Hence that indifference to religious opinions beyond the example of former ages.⁸ Hence that frivolosity of conduct, which

⁷The enemies of our civil and religious constitution have for many years been working in secret for the subversion of it by every art they can devise. One of the most effectual has been the command which they have got of the greater part of our periodical publications. When they have made a sufficient number of friends to abet their cause, there is no manner of doubt but they will endeavour to compel by force of arms what now they are aiming to accomplish by sophistry, misrepresentation, and false philosophy. The King's late well-timed proclamation has disconcerted their measures for the present, and given those restless and discontented spirits to see, that their party is not so powerful as they overweeningly conceived it to have been. The friends of this happy country, however, ought by no means to rest here. Our adversaries are straining every nerve to accomplish their designs. We ought to do the same for the support of what they are wishing to demolish. I am happy to inform the Reader of these *Strictures*, that a very respectable Society is formed in London for the express purpose of opposing, in every way they think most expedient, the enemies of our faith, our religion, and our laws.—For further particulars of this Society, see “A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles,” with a “Sequel to the Proposal,” at the end of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1792.

⁸There has been a very excellent little book published lately by an anonymous author, who calls himself, “One of the Laity,” which I could wish to be carefully read by every genteel person in the kingdom. It is entitled, “An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World;” and is well calculated to be of considerable use to that description of persons, if they could be prevailed upon to give it a serious perusal. There are many observations in it which are peculiarly worthy the attention of Dr. Priestley, and all our enlightened and liberal-minded philosophers. I will take the liberty of extracting one passage from the close of the first chapter, where he speaks of that laxity of religious opinions which is

which pervades all ranks of men, even where the interests of eternity are concerned. And hence too that general languor and lukewarmness so visible in many of our places of religious worship.

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highly distinguishes the character of the present age:—"The strong and generous bias," says this elegant and sensible writer, "in favour of universal toleration, noble as the principle itself is; has engendered a dangerous notion that all error is innocent. Whether it be owing to this, or to whatever other cause, it is certain that the discriminating features of the Christian religion are every day growing into less repute; and it is become the fashion; even among the better sort, to evade, to lower, or to generalize, its most distinguishing peculiarities.

"Having wisely and happily freed ourselves from the trammels of human authority, are we not turning our liberty into licentiousness, and wantonly struggling to throw off the *divine* authority too? Freedom of thought is the glory of the human mind, while it is confined within its just and sober limits; but though we are accountable for *opinions* at no earthly tribunal, yet it should be remembered that thoughts as well as actions are amenable to the bar of God: and though we may rejoice that the tyranny of the spiritual Procrustes is so far annihilated, that it is no longer thought a proof of the orthodoxy of one man's opinions, that he lop or lengthen those of another till they fit his own measure; yet there is still a standard by which not only actions are weighed, but opinions are judged; and every sentiment which is clearly inconsistent with the revealed will of God, is as much throwing off *his* dominion, as the breach of any of his moral precepts.

"There is then surely one test by which it is no mark of intolerance to try the principles of men, namely, the *Law and the Testimony*: and it is impossible not to lament, that, while a more generous spirit governs our judgment, a purer principle does not seem to regulate our lives. May it not be said, that, while we are justly commended for thinking charitably of the opinions of others, we seem, in return, as if we were desirous of furnishing them with an opportunity of exercising their candour, by the laxity of principle in which we indulge ourselves? If the hearts of men were as firmly united to each other by the bond of charity, as some pretend, they could not fail of being united to God also, by one common principle of piety, the only certain source of all charitable judgment, as well as of all virtuous conduct.

Now, if any person should wish to be directed into a more excellent way, and not to be the sport of deists,* sceptics, and Socinians,* let him look back, as we have before observed, to first principles.

“ Instead of abiding by the salutary precept of *judging no man*, “ it is the fashion to exceed our commission, and to fancy every “ body to be in a safe state. But, in forming our notions, we have “ to choose between the Bible and the world, between the rule and “ the practice. Where they do not agree, it is left to the judg- “ ment, of believers at least, by which we are to decide. But “ we never act, in religious concerns, by the same rule of com- “ mon sense and equitable judgment which governs us on other “ occasions. In weighing any commodity, its weight is deter- “ mined by some generally-allowed standard; and if the commo- “ dity be heavier or lighter than the standard weight, we add to or “ take from it: but we never break, or clip, or reduce the weight “ to suit the thing we are weighing; because the common content “ of mankind has agreed that the one shall be considered as the “ standard to ascertain the value of the other. But, in weighing “ our principles by the standard of the Gospel, we do just the re- “ verse. Instead of bringing our opinions and actions to the *ba- “ lance of the sanctuary*, to determine and rectify their comparative “ deficiencies, we lower and reduce the standard of the scripture “ doctrines till we have accommodated them to our own purposes; “ so that, instead of trying others and ourselves by God’s unerring “ rule, we try the truth of God’s rule by its conformity or non- “ conformity to our own depraved notions and corrupt practices.”

That declaration of Lord Bacon’s concerning the gospel of Christ, which I have somewhere met with, ought to confound every Deist, and shut his mouth for ever:—“ There never was “ found,” says he, “ in any age of the world, either philosophy, or “ sect, or religion, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt “ the public good as the Christian faith.”

Dr. Priestley, I think, is usually considered as the first Socinian of the age. I have observed on the 153d. page of these *Strictures*, that his learning is said to be various, but superficial. I have, since writing that observation, been somewhat confirmed in the supposition, by reading his “ *Miscellaneous Observations relating to Education* ” The advice he there gives, and especially in the third Section, where he treats of the Latin and Greek languages, is calculated to make no other than superficial scholars. After reading this we are no longer surprized at the various inaccuracies to be found in some of his polemical compositions, and that he has

principles. He will find his account in beginning with the holy scriptures, and reading them carefully and repeatedly over in chronological order. The margin and index of our larger bibles will enable him to do this with sufficient accuracy. Read them in the original languages, if you can: if not, in our own excellent translation.² Read them with fervent and

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persevering

given Dr. Horsley such repeated advantages over him. One may appeal to any good scholar for the justice of these observations. Dr. Priestley's advice respecting the two learned tongues is in direct opposition to the practice of all the best grammatical schools in England. No man can be an *able* scholar without a *thorough* acquaintance with Latin and Greek. I know something of both these languages myself; Dr. Priestley, no doubt, does the same: but I am far from thinking my acquaintance with them is such as to entitle me to the very honourable distinction of a *good classic*. And though I have no difficulty in granting, that Dr. Priestley is in every respect far superior to myself, yet there is reason to conclude, that neither is he entitled to that distinction. Mr. Whitaker, indeed, at the 85th page of his very learned work before mentioned, supposes Dr. Priestley so ignorant of the Latin tongue as not to be able to read Bishop Bull's Defence of the Nicene Faith in its original language, and wishes that some learned hand would be at the pains of translating it for the Doctor's information.— This is an uncandid reflection! It is a pity the warmth of controversy and zeal for truth should betray a worthy man into such a censure. If I have been guilty of any such in the course of these Strictures, I hereby recant them with all my spirit. Besides, if Dr. Priestley were incapable of reading the Latin original, Bishop Horsley and Mr. Whitaker may be informed, as they seem not to know the circumstance, that all Bishop Bull's works on the Holy Trinity, published by Dr. Grabe, have long since been translated and published in two octavo volumes, by Francis Holland, M. A. Rector of Sutton, Wilts. The translation I met with accidentally some years ago in a bookseller's shop at Bath. It was printed in 1730, and contains all Grabe's Notes, and some Reflections upon the Controvertists in this doctrine by the Translator.

“²The English translation of the bible is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best, taking in for the English translation, the Bishop's bible as well as king James's.”

Selden's Table Talk, p. 6.

persevering prayer to the Almighty, for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to guide your mind into the knowledge and experience of all saving truth. Read them frequently upon your knees; and, as much as possible, divest yourself of all prejudice of mind, and every preconceived opinion. I would recommend them, moreover, to be read without notes and illustrations of any kind; or at least, let them be very concise, and free from party rage. Comments and illustrations usually do more harm than good, by drawing our attention too much from the text itself. The marginal notes and references, together with the general chronological index at the end of our quarto bibles, are infinitely preferable to all the illustrations that ever were written, if we are desirous of knowing rather what is the mind of God in this word, than the religious nostrums of party-spirited commentators.

When we have got all the light and information that the holy scriptures afford, we need not give ourselves any concern about the various and contradictory opinions of men: but if any doubt should remain upon our minds, on subjects which seem important to the scheme of divine truth, let us not regard the ipse-dixits of any of our noisy pretenders to

This declaration was made by this most learned man near 150 years ago. Several very substantial reasons may now be urged, why a *revival* of our vulgar translation should take place; but I should be sorry to see a *new* one by public authority. A judicious *revival*, however, appears to me highly expedient, in the present improved state of literature. And I will add, Is not a *revival* of our public forms of prayer, &c. equally expedient?

to superior light and knowledge,³ but betake ourselves to the immediate followers of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles. They will clear up all our doubts, *at least with respect to matters of fact,*
and

³Many of these new-light people speak of the present state of learning and philosophy, as though the ages that are past knew nothing in comparison of the wonderful discoveries they are daily making, and nature were about to throw open all her secrets before them. If, however, they would but acquaint themselves thoroughly with the various works and inventions of our forefathers, they would find but little reason for exultation. Experimental philosophy has indeed been making considerable advances since the time of Friar Bacon. The discovery of the art of printing has had the happiest effects. But the stream can never rise higher than the fountain. Man is a limited creature. He may boast himself as he pleases; but his present powers are not equal to great things. And, at all events, whatever discoveries he may make in physics: in politics we may say, *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.* Every kind of government has been tried; and every kind has its advantages and disadvantages. Perfection belongs not to human institutions.

“ For forms of government let fools contest;

“ What e’er is best administer’d is best.”

And as to religion, that is fixed and limited. When God revealed his will to the Israelites by Moses, that revelation was the standard. No improvement was to be made, or could be made, till the dispensation itself should be changed by the same authority that enjoined it. The perfection of men under that institution was an exact compliance with all its injunctions. It is much the same under the Christian œconomy. The New Testament is the rule and standard. No addition, no amendment, no alteration, no improvement, can be admitted here. All is pure, all is perfect, nothing too little, nothing too much. Give us but a true and uncorrupted copy, and it admits of no clipping and curtailings by any of our self-conceited bible-menders whatever. Dr. Priestley’s experimental dexterity will not apply to the book of revelation in like manner as to the volume of creation. The sentiments of the truly learned and excellent Bishop Hurd, whom the Doctor presumes to treat with pity and indignation, because, forsooth! he believes in the divinity and atonement of his Saviour; are applicable to the point in hand. This great Man’s writings, however, are as much superior to the theological compositions of the learned Doctor as silver is superior to tincl. There is a modesty in the

and we may safely abide by their determination. What all these great and good men, for the first three or four centuries, clearly agreed to establish, bids fair to be the truth, and here we may securely set our foot.

I know

one, which is a sure indication of a great mind; and a haughty kind of confidence in the other, which betrays a want of self-knowledge. The one reasons justly, the other sophistically: the one pleads the cause of God; defends the personal honour of his Son; vindicates the authenticity of his word; and wipes off the aspersions cast upon the generation of God's children: the other obscures the glory of the Divine Being; degrades his only begotten Son to the rank of a mere, frail, weak, peccable, and mistaken man; rejects some parts of holy scripture entirely, and represents what he does retain as being full of blunders and misrepresentations; and exalts the ancient heretics to the rank of the only true servants of the living God, while all the orthodox Fathers of the church, men famous in their generation, and renowned in all ages for their learning, faith, and piety, are considered in the light of idolaters.—But—let us hear the sentiments of this truly learned Prelate:—"Even in the pursuits of *human science*," says he, "where reason can do most, all the efforts of the ablest understanding penetrate but a little way. We know enough of *the nature of things*, to serve the purposes of common life; and enough of *the nature of man*, to discover our duty towards each other. And within this narrow circle all our knowledge, be we as proud of it as we please, is confined. Clouds and darkness cover the rest; and this the ablest men of all times have seen and confessed. If there be a man, whom Heaven has formed with greater powers and stronger faculties than are commonly met with in the species, he is the *first* to discover, and to lament, his own blindness and weakness: a Socrates and a Pascal have been considered as prodigies of parts and ingenuity; yet, while the meanest Sophister is puffed up with the conceit of his own knowledge, these divine men confess nothing so readily as their own ignorance.

"And, if this be the case of human learning, what must we think of *divine*? where Reason teaches nothing, beyond the existence and attributes of God, and, as to every thing else, without the aid of *Revelation*, is stark-blind. *The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God*—is an assertion, to which common sense and common experience must assent. Yet shall

I know it will be objected—What are we to go to the Fathers, and read all their voluminous writings, before we fix our religious principles? Then what will become of the great majority of mankind, who have it not in their power so to do?

This objection seems plausible; but, to use the words of a learned man, “every person must judge
“ for himself in proportion to those abilities which
“ God has given him. If he have opportunity
“ and learning for that purpose, he will do well to
“ search into the records of antiquity; but otherwise he must content himself with the reports of
“ learned men, of those especially to whose charge
“ he is committed, and of whose integrity he can
“ have no reasonable doubt. I know no other
“ way by which he may be able to prove, that the
“ New Testament itself, upon which he founds his
“ belief, is really the word of God. He must
“ trust to the tradition of the church, and particularly to the fidelity of the first successors of
“ the Apostles, that such books were really written
“ by those holy persons, under whose names they
“ are transmitted to us. And since there were many
“ other histories, as St. Luke bears witness, of
“ our

“ every idle speculatist, who has but the confidence to call himself
“ a Philosopher, treat the *divine word*, as freely as any ordinary
“ subject; and pronounce as peremptorily of the *revealed will of*
“ *God*, which the angels themselves adore in silence, as if he
“ knew for certain, that his poor and scanty understanding was
“ commensurate with the councils of the Most High!”

Sermons at Lincoln's-Inn, vol. 1, p. 226, 227.

“ our Saviour’s life and actions, he must trust them
 “ again in distinguishing between them, and judg-
 “ ing which were written by inspiration of God, and
 “ which were merely human compositions. After
 “ this he must trust them with the safe custody of
 “ these books, and taking care that copies might be
 “ faithfully transcribed from them. Then he must
 “ trust the copyists of succeeding ages with trans-
 “ cribing from such as were before them. And
 “ when the art of printing was found out, he must
 “ trust the several editors with collating the copies
 “ which occurred to them, and noting their re-
 “ spective variations. So far the learned and un-
 “ learned must trust to them alike: but the latter
 “ besides all this must rely upon the credit of trans-
 “ lators, for faithfully conveying to them the sense
 “ of the original. So that, to shut out human evi-
 “ dence from the proofs of our faith, so far as it is
 “ capable of being proved by facts, is really to sap
 “ the foundation upon which it stands, and to set
 “ men loose to eternal scepticism and uncertainty.
 “ It is in effect to say, we should believe no farther
 “ than our senses reach; and then there is an end of
 “ all the credibility of history for the ages that
 “ are past, or even for the present, excepting in
 “ those few occurrences of which we may happen
 “ to be witnesses ourselves.”*

Whether this method of investigating religious
 truth meets with the approbation of the Reader or
 not,

*Berriman on the Trinity, p. 11.

not, it is the mode I have for a number of years pursued in the settlement of my own religious opinions, and that in which I have found much satisfaction to my own mind.⁵ And from experience I would earnestly recommend it to every Christian who wishes to save his soul alive, and to be thoroughly grounded and settled in the faith and hope of the gospel.

Should any person be excited by these hints to begin a course of reading in this way, and yet be in want of further direction, the following short scheme is submitted to his consideration, till he is acquainted with a better. And as these Strictures are written, not so much for scholars, as for those who are strangers to the learned languages, the Reader must be directed to such books, and translations of books, as we are already in possession of, rather than such as might be desired. And,

1. The Bible—our common translation, with the marginal references, and general index.⁶ This must

⁵I have endeavoured to investigate in this manner several of the most important doctrines of Christianity in chronological order. The doctrine of predestination, the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, with that of the Trinity, have all been brought to the test of scripture and antiquity. If life, health and leisure are continued to finish my papers, I may probably some time or other submit them to the perusal of my friends.

⁶The most useful Bible that ever was printed for a mere English reader is that published by the Rev. Clement Cruttwell, with Bishop Wilson's short Notes. Its *peculiar* excellence is the various translations in one view at the bottom of the text.

must be repeatedly read,' with serious prayer to the Almighty for divine aid and illumination, according to the order of time in which each book was written.—See by all means Prov. 2. 1—9, and Luke 11. 5—13.—“ Believe simply, with the meekness of
 “ a child, just as you are told by God, without
 “ murmuring or disputing. Depend as absolutely,
 “ day by day, on the teaching of Christ, through his
 “ word and Spirit, for the knowledge of all things
 “ needful to salvation, as any pupil, at an academy,
 “ depends on the instructions of an able and cele-
 “ brated master.”

2. The two Epistles of St. Clement to the Corinthians.

3. The seven shorter Epistles of Ignatius.

4. The Epistle of Polycarp.

5. The Martyrdoms of Ignatius and Polycarp.

6. The Epistle of St. Barnabas.

7. The Shepherd of Hermas.

These are all to be had in one small octavo volume, well translated by Archbishop Wake.

8. The Apology of Tertullian.

9. The first Apology of Justin Martyr.

10. The Octavius of Minutius Felix.

11. The Commonitory of Vicentius Lirinensis.

These
 'If ever Lord Bacon's observation held good of any book, it holds good of the Bible.—“ Some books,” says this wonderful man, “ are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is,” continues he, “ some books are to be read only in part; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read, wholly, and with diligence and attention.”

Essay 50.

These four are all very valuable, and to be bought for a trifle in two volumes octavo, translated by the Rev. William Reeves, M. A.

12. Athenagoras's Apology and Discourse on the Resurrection.

These may be had in one thin octavo volume, translated by the Rev. David Humphreys, B. A.

13. The Works of St. Cyprian.

These may be met with in catalogues for a small sum in one thin folio volume, translated by the Rev. Nathaniel Marshall, M. A.

14. The Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho the Jew.

This is in two octavo volumes, translated by the Rev. Mr. Brown.

15. St. Chrysostom on the Priesthood.

This is well translated by the Rev. John Bunce, M. A.

Several other works of the early Christian writers might be perused with advantage, had we good translations of them; but this is not the case, I think, with many more than these I have already mentioned. Irenæus, in particular, would be very useful in ascertaining the original doctrines of Christianity to the English reader, if a translation of his five books against the ancient heretics were laid before the public. Origin's eight books against Celsus, the Epicurean philosopher, were written towards the latter end of that great man's life, and would
be

be of much use to the curious enquirer into the original doctrines of Christianity, if we were favoured with a good translation of them.*

All these are works of real reputation, may be procured for a little money, and read at a moderate expense of time. The whole of those in English, bible included, may be purchased at the small sum of four or five pounds, and carefully read over at leisure hours, the important passages extracted into an interleaved bible, or common-place book, in the course of four or five years, more or less according

*There are a few other authors, besides these just mentioned, which should be carefully read by the inquisitive Christian, who is desirous of light and information concerning the original doctrines of Christianity.

1. The Ecclesiastical Histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodorit, and Evagrius Scholasticus.—These may be had in English.

2. Cave's *Historia Literaria*.—This is in Latin, and, I believe, was never rendered into our own language.

3. Cave's *Lives of the Primitive Fathers*.

4. Cave's *Primitive Christianity*.—These two are written in English.

5. Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*.—This is written in English.

6. Dupin's *New History of Ecclesiastical Writers*.—This is a very valuable work, and may be had in English.

7. The whole Works of Bishop Bull.—Part of these are in Latin and part in English.

8. Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*.

9. The Works of Philo, the learned Jew.—These are in Greek.

10. The Works of Josephus, the Jewish warrior.—These were written in Greek, but have been repeatedly translated into English.

11. The Preparation for the Gospel: And,

12. The Demonstration of the Gospel.—These two were written in Greek, by the learned Eusebius, and, I think, have never been translated into the English tongue. They contain, however, much curious and useful information, of which scholars should not be ignorant.

ing to our diligence and zeal. Few Christians, whose minds are sufficiently refined and improved to be capable of the undertaking, would grudge so trifling a sum, in the course of human life, for the sake of obtaining a benefit so inestimable, as satisfaction to the mind, on the most important of all subjects in the world, religion.

But the misfortune is, that the great body of the people, in this and every other country, take their religion upon trust. If they happen to be born Heathens, Jews, Mahometans, or Christians, such they remain, without knowing why or wherefore, only their parents and friends are the same. So among Christians, if they are born Catholics or Protestants, such they will continue, determining not to be wiser than their forefathers. In like manner, if they are sprung from Protestant parents, they take the sect their parents took; believe, or pretend to believe, the principles they are supposed to entertain, without giving themselves any trouble concerning either the truth or the falsehood of them: inasmuch that, if they are in possession of the true principles of the gospel, it is rather by good luck, than owing to any superior merit and sagacity of their own. Such a profession of religion, common sense tells us, can never be considered as a sacrifice acceptable to the Divine Being.

These same persons, however, will not act in this careless and incautious manner, if they have

got a purchase to make. They will examine nicely the quantity as well as the quality of the commodity they wish to possess; and if they conceive their own judgment defective in any respect, they will call in the assistance of their friends; and, should it be real estate they are in quest of, they will not be satisfied till the title is investigated by counsel learned in the law. How different is our conduct in things spiritual, and of importance infinitely greater! For the soul of man being immortal in its nature,⁹ whatever regards its welfare will not bear a comparison even with the most valuable and excellent of our temporal concerns. The great body of mankind, however, are all fully occupied about the latter, and strangely inattentive to the former. We are cautious in every thing but where we ought to be most of all so. Hence we become an

⁹It is some satisfaction to the mind, amidst the opposition of materialists of every description, that the first Philosophers, Orators, Poets, and Divines in the world, have ever held the doctrine of the soul's immortality. Among the Greeks we find Homer, Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plutarch, and others: among the Romans Virgil, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, and many more: among Christian divines we have an innumerable multitude: I might instance in Barrow, Wilkins, Howe, Butler, Clarke, and vast numbers beside. If it be objected that these were all interested witnesses, it being their trade to inculcate received notions: it may be replied, that the first of Poets and Philosophers, who had no secular ends to answer, have constantly maintained the same opinions. Among the former we find Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, West, Littleton, and Addison: among the latter Newton, Locke, Boyle, to whom we may add the two Bacons; men whose names in the philosophical world may justly be called Legion!

an easy prey to every designing seducer. If such persons fall into the hands of an artful deist,¹ a sanguacious sceptic,² a subtle Socinian,³ or any other

M m 2

specious

¹The deist rejects the authority of holy scripture entirely; the sceptic doubts of its veracity; and Dr. Priestley, who is partly a deist, partly a sceptic, and partly a Socinian, cashiers some parts of it wholly, doubts of others, and embraces others: so that, strictly speaking, he can no more be reasoned with, upon scriptural principles, than either of the former. And yet the Doctor is persuaded the time is near at hand "when the whole Christian world will embrace their opinion (Drs. Priestley and Price) when all those who now think differently from them, shall come to think just as they do, and wonder they should ever have thought otherwise." Defences of Unitarianism, 1787.

This is pretty confident, I think! Equally so is a late advocate for Polytheism, of the establishment of *his* religion in the world. "The revolution," says he, "is certain; however remote;" but "this must be the business of a *more enlightened* and philosophical age." Editor of Proclus.—See the Dissenter's Looking Glass, p. 91.

Whether Dr. Priestley's *unitarianism* or this gentleman's *polytheism* shall prevail, or whether they shall both find themselves mistaken in their sanguine expectations, must be left to time to discover. This, however, is most certain, that the bible, and the truths it contains, shall finally triumph over all opposition; and every whim of enthusiasts, infidels, and philosophers, be forever confounded. They have all much to say for themselves. So had Jannes and Jambres against Moses: so had the Scribes and Pharisees against Christ: but they reasoned all awry. So does Hammon, Voltaire, Dr. Priestley, and our other opposers of the truth, of every description. Their reasoning is specious and bearing the semblance of worth, but false and hollow. A fine instance of this sound and sophistical reasoning we have in Milton's *Paradise Regained*. Satan and Christ advance whatever can be said in favour of their respective pretensions.

²That is a just and important observation which is made by the profound Pascal:—"Should a man," says he, "happen to err in supposing the Christian religion to be true, he could be no loser by the mistake. But how irrecoverable is *his* loss, how inexpressible *his* danger, who should err in supposing it to be false."

Thoughts on Religion, p. 287.

³Dr. White, in his admirable sermons at the Bampton Lecture, speaking of Socinianism, says, "There is no period of the Christian

specious pretender to liberality and truth,⁴ they must either become converts to their opinions, or have their minds harrassed with doubts and painful apprehensions, till they are settled upon some stable foundation. Indeed, it is of little consequence what we are, what we believe, or to what party we belong, unless we are thoroughly in earnest about salvation. Till this is the case, we are sure to perish upon any principles whatever; be we in other respects, ever so sensible, wise, learned, or moral.⁵

But

“ church in which the divinity of Christ was not admitted as a primary article.”

Again :—“ Examine Socinianism by any rule of history that has been adopted for the trial of any fact, or the determination that has been passed on any opinion, and we can scarcely avoid seeing its utter inconsistency with the universal creed of the Christian church from the earliest period of its existence to the present time.”

Again :—“ Socinianism makes every thing doubtful. And no wonder—while it makes so little of the most express declarations of scripture, we need not be surprised that it should pay so little respect to the plainest evidence of history.”

Again :—“ The gradation from Socinianism to deism is very slight.”

And again :—“ Socinianism cuts to the very root of all that is distinguishing in the gospel.” See more to the same purpose in the Notes to these very able discourses, p. 60—68.

⁴The greatest deceivers are usually the greatest pretenders to liberality, candour, disinterestedness, truth, and whatever else is plausible, and calculated to captivate the minds of men, whose passions are strong and judgment weak. The multitude have been the dupes of such characters in every age and country. See Mat. 7. 15.—23.

“⁵A man must be serious in order to be wise.” Chinese Fragment, p. 153.

This Fragment, as it is called, contains an Enquiry into the present state of religion in England. Who the author is I know not: he appears to be a serious and sensible man. The account, however, which he gives of the state of things, in every religious point

But if the salvation of the soul once becomes our main concern, and the chief business we have in life; if the Bible⁶ is considered as the only sure and *infallible* rule of judging, and is made familiar to the mind: if the great doctrines of redemption are established

of view, is very dark and alarming. I could wish all our great men would consider well what he advances in the conclusion of that work. If Britons had cause to tremble six years ago, when that book was published; much more have we cause to be afraid of God's judgments now, when our iniquities are increased, and increasing in a rapid degree, and a spirit of dissatisfaction is gone abroad among the lower orders of the people. There must be a great shaking of the nations, and various distressing convulsions, it is to be feared, before the kingdom of Christ can be properly established in the world. Let the great Ones of the earth be apprised of their danger before it is too late, and make God their refuge. The signs of the times are alarming. When or where the storm will fall, divine providence alone must direct. This, however, we know for certain, that in the worst of times, it shall be well with them that fear the Lord. See Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times, the conclusion—Hartley's Observations on Man, vol. 2d. the conclusion—and the Preface to the 2d. vol. of the Speeches of M. De Mirabeau, by James White, Esqr.

⁶If in the course of these Strictures I have been betrayed into expressions too hasty and severe, it has been where Dr. Priestley attacks the truth of holy scripture, with the person and undertaking of the Son of God. I have reviewed again and again those particular passages, since they were printed; and I find some of them severe enough, it is confessed; but yet such only as the circumstances seem to justify. God forbid I should ever hesitate for one moment between the favour of Dr. Priestley and the approbation of my blessed Saviour! I well know the Doctor can retaliate with abundant interest—witness his very indecent treatment of Bishop Horsley—but I am probably a mark too mean for him to take any notice of; and may therefore have some chance to escape from my mere obscurity. At all events, if I have really done him injustice (in the opinion of impartial men) I beg pardon both of God and him. Justice is due to every man, more especially to a person of Dr. Priestley's respectability. *Fiat justitia: ruat cælum!*

established upon the authority of clear passages drawn from thence ; and confirmed by the unanimous testimony of the Greek and Latin fathers, for the three or four first centuries, in regular succession ; we may, by the grace of God, defy all the seducers that ever lived to subvert our faith and hope in the grand peculiarities of the evangelical system.⁷ These are principles which have been thoroughly

⁷I would always be understood to make a distinction between the evangelical system, as contained in the New Testament, and all human forms, creeds, and compendiums of doctrine whatever. Not that I have any objection to them myself, provided they are consonant to the great standard of all truth, the Bible, soberly understood. But, I must confess, it appears to me, that there is much need of a reform in the ecclesiastical establishment of this country in several respects. We have various little blemishes which ought to be removed. Our Reformers were several of them great and good men, and acquitted themselves excellently. But it is long since they lived. They were just emerging from Popery. Men's views are now, in several respects, more enlarged. Our language too has undergone some changes. Criticism has been much attended to, and the holy scriptures have been more accurately studied. I should suppose, therefore, that a *revision* of our public forms, and the present translation of the bible, might have the happiest effect in removing the objections of candid, enlightened churchmen, making them more steady adherents to the religious establishment of their country, and bringing over abundance of the pious and moderate men from among our dissenting brethren. This would be strengthening the hands of government, and rendering our church, more than ever, the joy and praise of the whole earth.

For, whatever compliments we may pass upon ourselves, and however we may make our boast, that ours is the purest and best constituted national church in Christendom, which I have no difficulty in granting ; yet blemishes we surely have ; and such blemishes, as, to my certain knowledge, hurt and grieve the minds of many of the most sensible and enlightened, both of our clergy and laity. These blemishes, therefore, ought to be removed from our public forms ; yea, and, I should suppose, must be removed, if we mean to have the present establishment handed down to future ages. And, it

thoroughly tried, and the gates of hell shall never finally prevail against them. It is to such Christians as wish to make their last great stake both safe and sure, and to enjoy the satisfaction of knowing in whom they have believed, and why they embrace the orthodox scheme of redemption rather than any other, these Strictures are offered in the fear of God.

May that Great Being, the Father of lights, and God of all consolation, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning; who, according to his own will, teacheth man knowledge, and from whom alone proceedeth every good and perfect gift; guide all our minds into the truth as it is in Jesus, and bring us safe at last into his heavenly kingdom!

where

seems to me, that the present time is more favourable to such an *internal* reformation as I have hinted at, than any other that is likely to succeed it: because there seems to be learning, piety, good sense, orthodoxy, and moderation, sufficient in our present ecclesiastical governours for the conducting of such a work. They would only *revise*, I think, and not *change*, or *materially* alter our present forms. His Majesty also, and our civil governours, would easily be brought to concur, I doubt not, in such a salutary measure. The King who sanctioned, the men who executed, and the ministers of state who concurred in such a *revision* would immortalize their names, and be denominated the friends of rational religion, and the benefactors of mankind. They would relieve many a tender and injured conscience, render the religion of our blessed Saviour more amiable, and worthy of acceptance, and incline the more candid deists themselves to embrace the Christian redemption, as well as bring over the moderate dissenters to worship God according to the religion of their country. This must be allowed, I think, by every candid churchman, a consummation devoutly to be wished!

where we shall no longer look through a glass darkly, but face to face; love as we are loved, see as we are seen, know as we are known, and spend an eternity together in the rapturous contemplation of that mysterious Deity, who chose us in Christ Jesus before the world began; justifies us freely by his grace; sanctifies us wholly by his Spirit; and washes us from our sins in the blood of his own Son; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



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